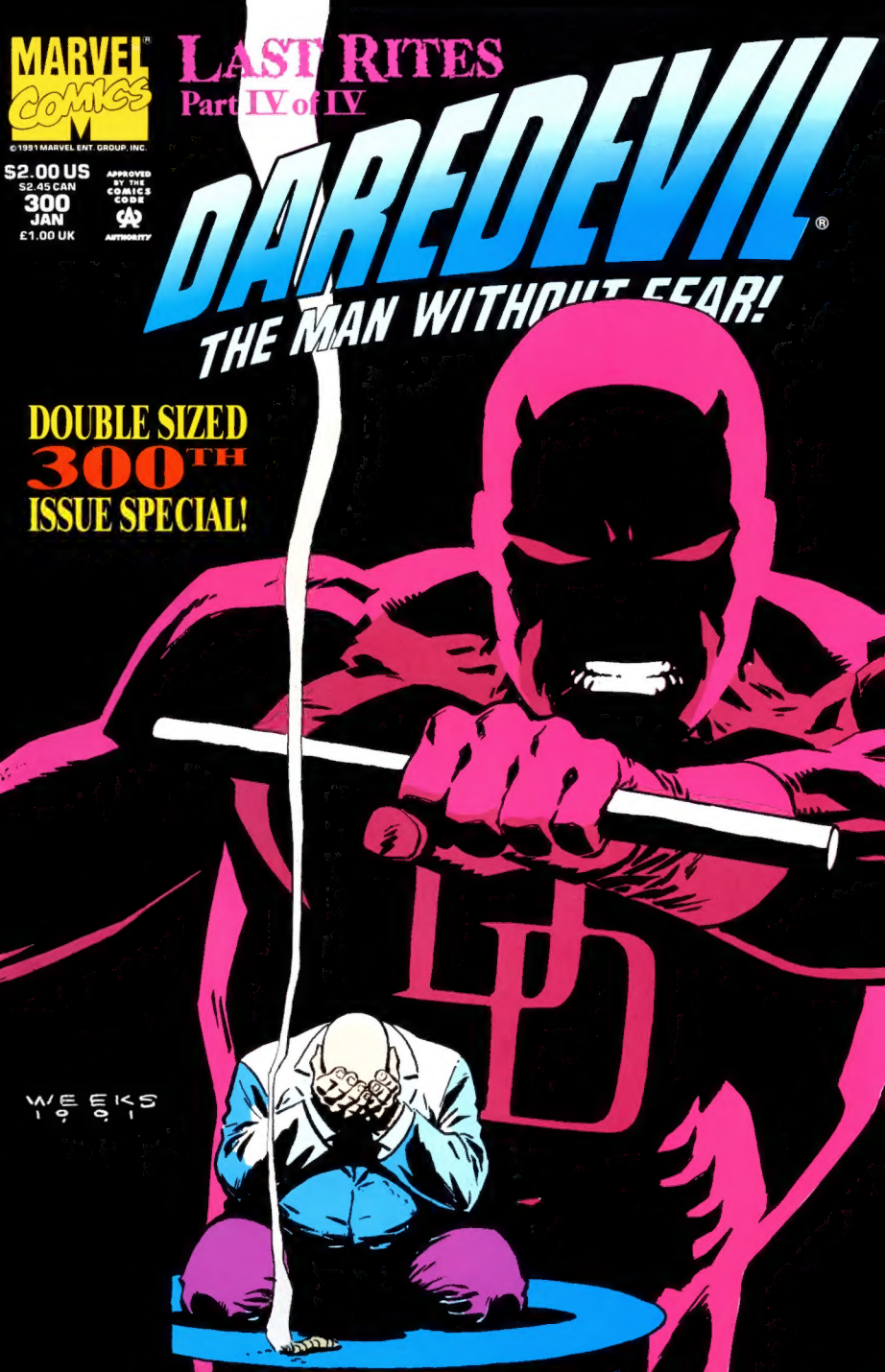
MARVEL COMICS
LAST RITES
Part IV of IV
DAREDEVIL®
THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!
DOUBLE SIZED
300TH
ISSUE SPECIAL!
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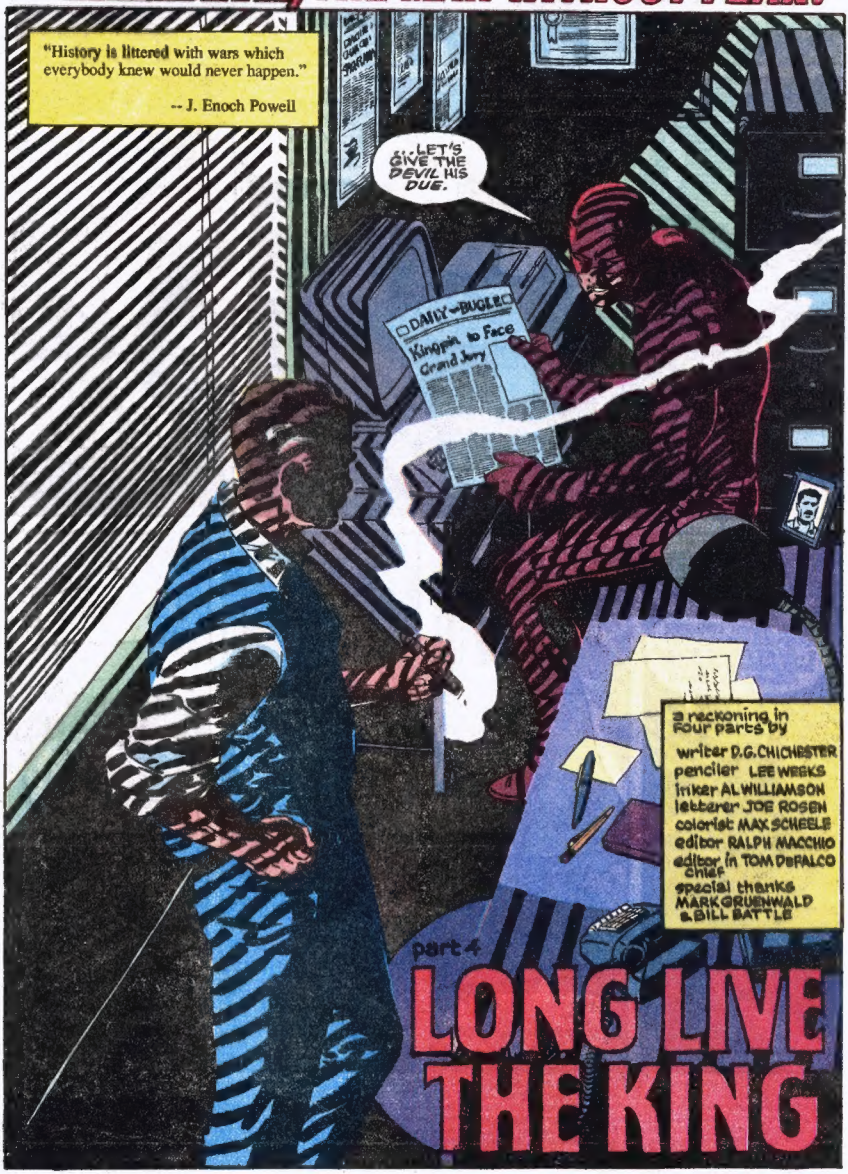
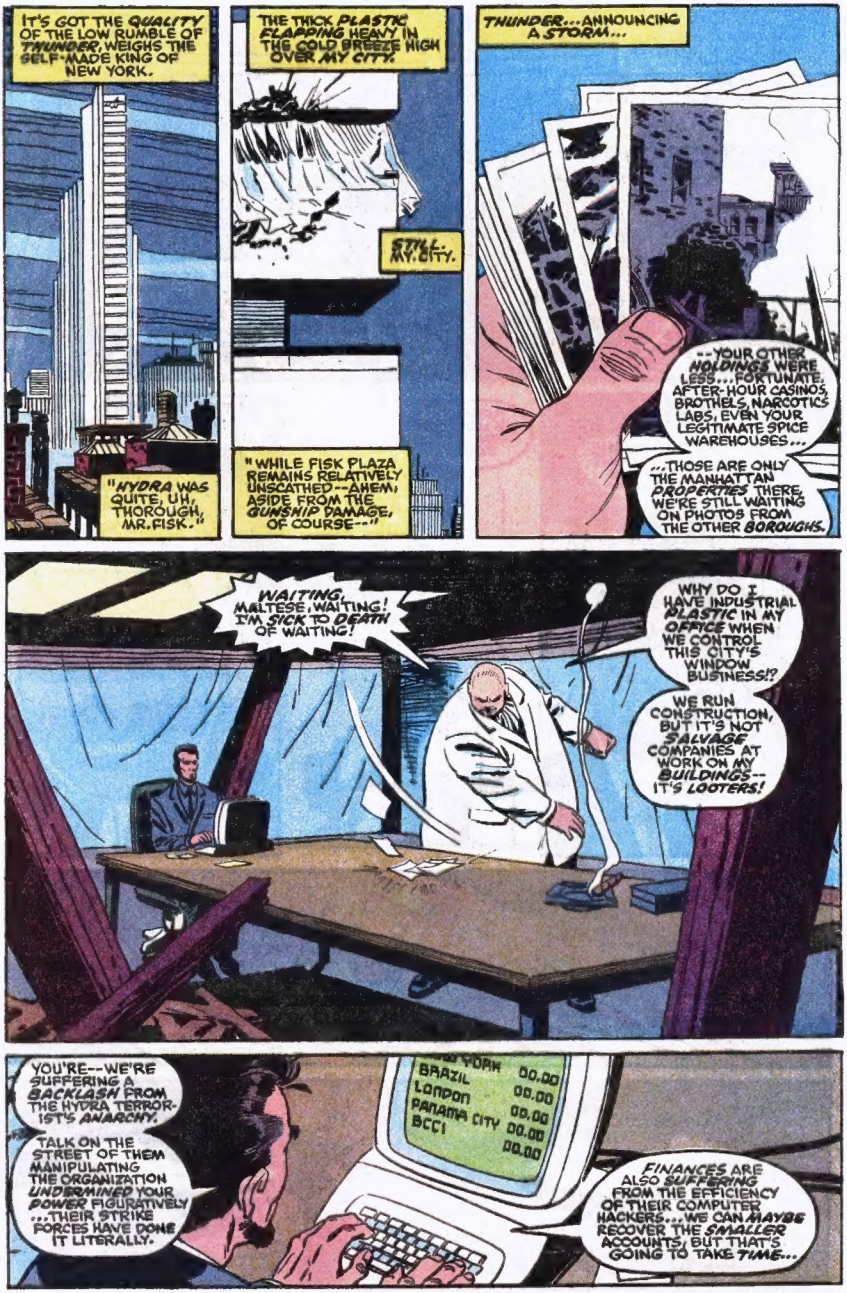
A CHILDHOOD ACCIDENT STOLE HIS SIGHT, BUT, INCREDIBLY, IT ENDOWED YOUNG MATT MURDOCK WITH RADAR VISION AND HEIGHTENED SENSES. ARMED ONLY WITH HIS ATHLETIC PROWESS, BILLY CLUB, AND INDOMITABLE COURAGE, MATT BATTLES INJUSTICE AS A CRIMSON-CLAD GLADIATOR!

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

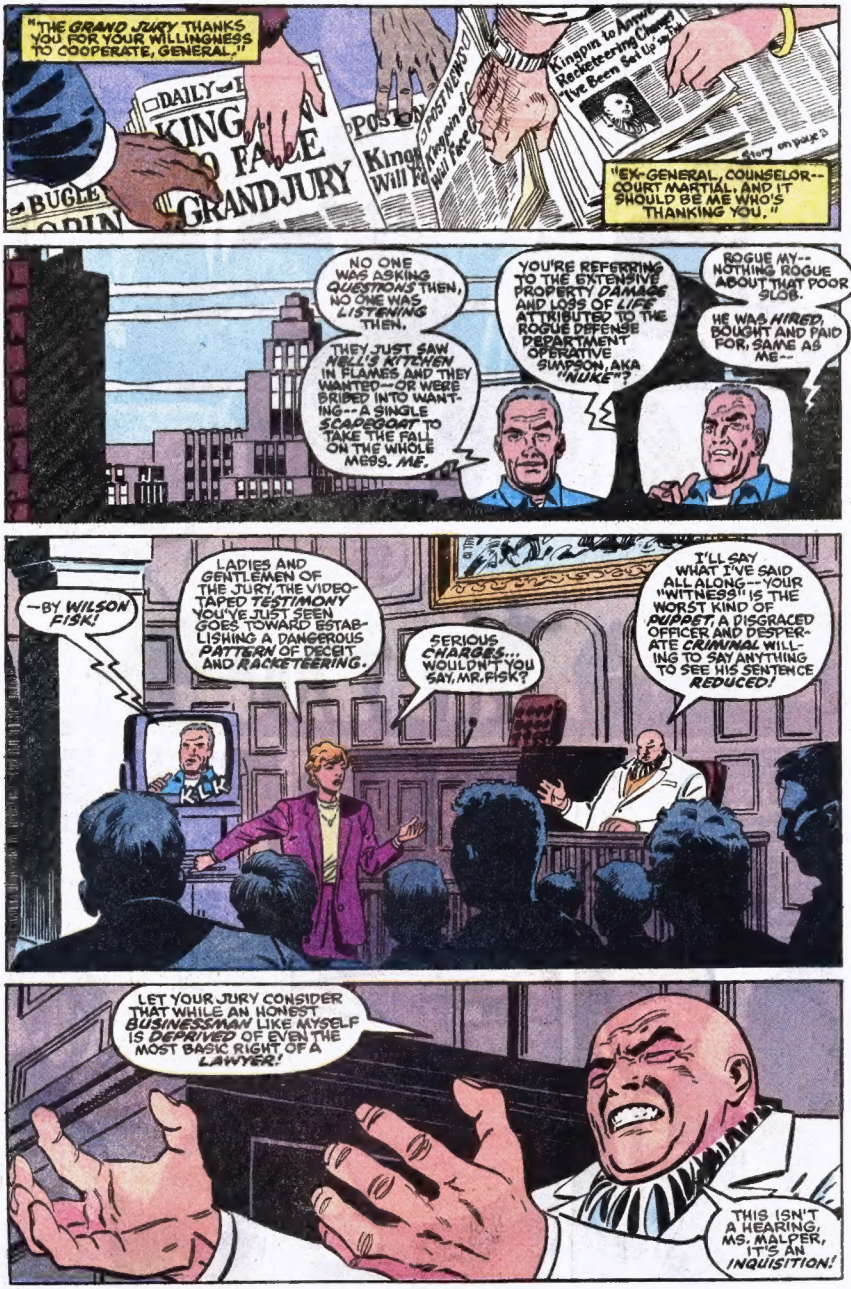
DAREDEVIL, THE MAN WITHOUT FEAR!




IT'S GOT THE QUALITY OF THE LOW RUMBLE OF THUNDER, WEIGHS THE SELF-MADE KING OF NEW YORK.
"HYDRA WAS QUITE, UH, THOROUGH, MR. FISK."
THE THICK PLASTIC FLAPPING HEAVY IN THE COLD BREEZE HIGH OVER MY CITY.
STILL... MY CITY.
"WHILE FISK PLAZA REMAINS RELATIVELY UNSCATHED--AHEM; ASIDE FROM THE GUNSHIP DAMAGE, OF COURSE--"
THUNDER... ANNOUNCING A STORM...
--YOUR OTHER HOLDINGS WERE LESS... FORTUNATE. AFTER-HOUR CASINOS, BROTHELS, NARCOTICS LABS, EVEN YOUR LEGITIMATE SPICE WAREHOUSES...
...THOSE ARE ONLY THE MANHATTAN PROPERTIES THERE. WE'RE STILL WAITING ON PHOTOS FROM THE OTHER BOROUGHS.
WAITING. MALTESE, WAITING! I'M SICK TO DEATH OF WAITING!
WHY DO I HAVE INDUSTRIAL PLASTIC IN MY OFFICE WHEN WE CONTROL THIS CITY'S WINDOW BUSINESS!?
WE RUN CONSTRUCTION, BUT IT'S NOT SALVAGE COMPANIES AT WORK ON MY BUILDINGS-- IT'S LOOTERS!
YOU'RE--WE'RE SUFFERING A BACKLASH FROM THE HYDRA TERRORIST'S ANARCHY.
TALK ON THE STREET OF THEM MANIPULATING THE ORGANIZATION UNDERMINED YOUR POWER FIGURATIVELY ...THEIR STRIKE FORCES HAVE DONE IT LITERALLY.
BRAZIL 00.00
LONDON 00.00
PANAMA CITY 00.00
BCCI 00.00
00.00
FINANCES ARE ALSO SUFFERING FROM THE EFFICIENCY OF THEIR COMPUTER HACKERS... WE CAN MAYBE RECOVER THE SMALLER ACCOUNTS, BUT THAT'S GOING TO TAKE TIME...

MY BLINDS GONE, NOTHING TO HIDE ME FROM PEERING EYES AS I LOOK OUT OVER MY DOMAIN.
REPLACED NOW BY THIS MURKY SHEET, NOTHING CLEAR THROUGH ITS CLOUDY, DISTORTING SURFACE, BE IT MY CITY OR MY--
NOTHING IS CLEAR.
NOTHING.
WHAT ALL THIS MEANS IS YOU'VE GOT A CRIMINAL ELEMENT ADOPTING A "WAIT AND SEE" ATTITUDE--
CARRION WAITING TO FEED.
--UH, RIGHT--
--AND THE POLITICIANS AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ON OUR PAYROLL ARE EQUALLY HESITANT--
AFRAID I'M NOW TOO "HOT TO THE TOUCH."
--AS YOU SAY--
--AND YOUR... OUR... MONETARY DIFFICULTIES HAVE LEFT US UNABLE TO SWEETEN THE DEAL WITH EITHER FACTION.
ALL TOLD, BOTH SIDES ARE AFRAID OF GETTING THEIR HANDS DIRTY.
THAT'S RICH--THE LEGAL AND ILLEGAL CORRUPT, AFRAID OF GETTING THEIR HANDS DIRTY!
I REMEMBER A TIME WHEN A LITTLE BLOOD ON A MAN'S HANDS...
...WAS A MARK OF SUCCESS...

EXCUSE ME, MR. FISK, I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT--
YOU WILL BE SORRY, MS. O'NEILL-- THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT MEETING! NOW BACK TO YOUR DESK BEFORE--
CHECK THE BUGLE'S WANT ADS ON YOUR COFFEE BREAK, SISTER, BUT NOT BECAUSE A' QUAKER OATS-- I'M HOLDIN' THE REAL REASON EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE ABOUT TO DROP OFF HERE!
I...I TRIED TO TELL YOU...
I HAVE A SEARCH WARRANT FOR THESE PREMISES ON SUSPICION OF ACTIVITIES FALLING UNDER THE RACKETEER-INFLUENCED AND CORRUPT ORGANIZATIONS ACT.
MOVE 'EM OUT, BOYS!
THIS--THIS IS UNCONSCIONABLE! EVEN WITH MR. FISK'S CURRENT... HARDSHIP ...THERE ARE PROTOCOLS!
MALTESE...
OUR BUSINESS HAS LONG-STANDING ARRANGEMENTS WITH THE CITY AND STATE TO AVOID THIS SORT OF THING!
"ARRANGE-MENTS"--READ BAYORRS. IS THAT IT, MR.-- MALTESE? LIKE THE FALCON? I LOVE THAT MOVIE!
BUT AS INTER-ESTING AS ALL THAT IS-- BOTH YOUR NAME AND THE PAY-OFFS--THE PROBLEM AS FAR AS YOU'RE CONCERNED IS WE'RE NOT CITY OR STATE.
WE'RE FEDERAL.
KATHY MALPER, UNITED STATES D.A., MANHATTAN DISTRICT.
WELCOME TO THE BIG LEAGUES, MR. FISK...



"THE *GRAND JURY* THANKS YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE, GENERAL."

DAILY

KING

FACE

GRAND JURY

BUGLE

POST

Kingpin to Answer Racketeering Charges "I've Been Set Up" in Jail

Story on page 3

"EX-GENERAL, COUNSELOR--COURT MARTIAL, AND IT SHOULD BE ME WHO'S THANKING YOU."

NO ONE WAS ASKING *QUESTIONS* THEN, NO ONE WAS *LISTENING* THEN.

THEY JUST SAW *HELL'S KITCHEN* IN FLAMES AND THEY WANTED--OR WERE BRIBED INTO WANTING--A SINGLE *SCAPEGOAT* TO TAKE THE FALL ON THE WHOLE MESS. *ME.*

YOU'RE REFERRING TO THE EXTENSIVE PROPERTY *DAMAGE* AND LOSS OF *LIFE* ATTRIBUTED TO THE ROGUE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT OPERATIVE SIMPSON, AKA *"NUKE"*?

ROGUE MY--NOTHING ROGUE ABOUT THAT POOR SLOB.

HE WAS *HIRED*, BOUGHT AND PAID FOR, SAME AS ME--

--BY *WILSON FISK!*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY, THE VIDEOTAPED *TESTIMONY* YOU'VE JUST SEEN GOES TOWARD ESTABLISHING A DANGEROUS *PATTERN* OF DECEIT AND *RACKETEERING.*

SERIOUS *CHARGES*... WOULDN'T YOU SAY, MR. FISK?

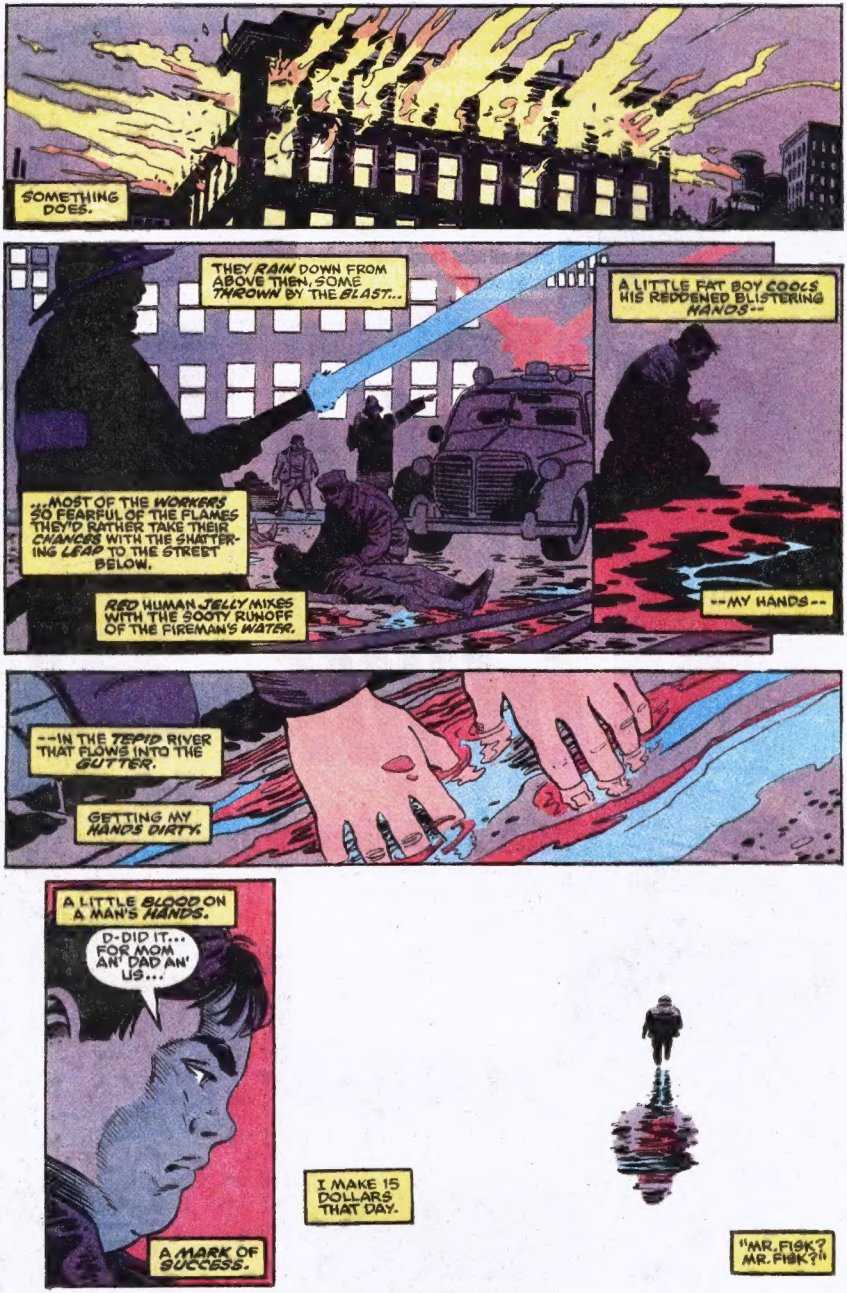
I'LL SAY WHAT I'VE SAID ALL ALONG--YOUR "WITNESS" IS THE WORST KIND OF *PUPPET*, A DISGRACED OFFICER AND DESPERATE *CRIMINAL* WILLING TO SAY ANYTHING TO SEE HIS SENTENCE *REDUCED!*

LET YOUR JURY CONSIDER THAT WHILE AN HONEST *BUSINESSMAN* LIKE MYSELF IS *DEPRIVED* OF EVEN THE MOST BASIC RIGHT OF A *LAWYER!*

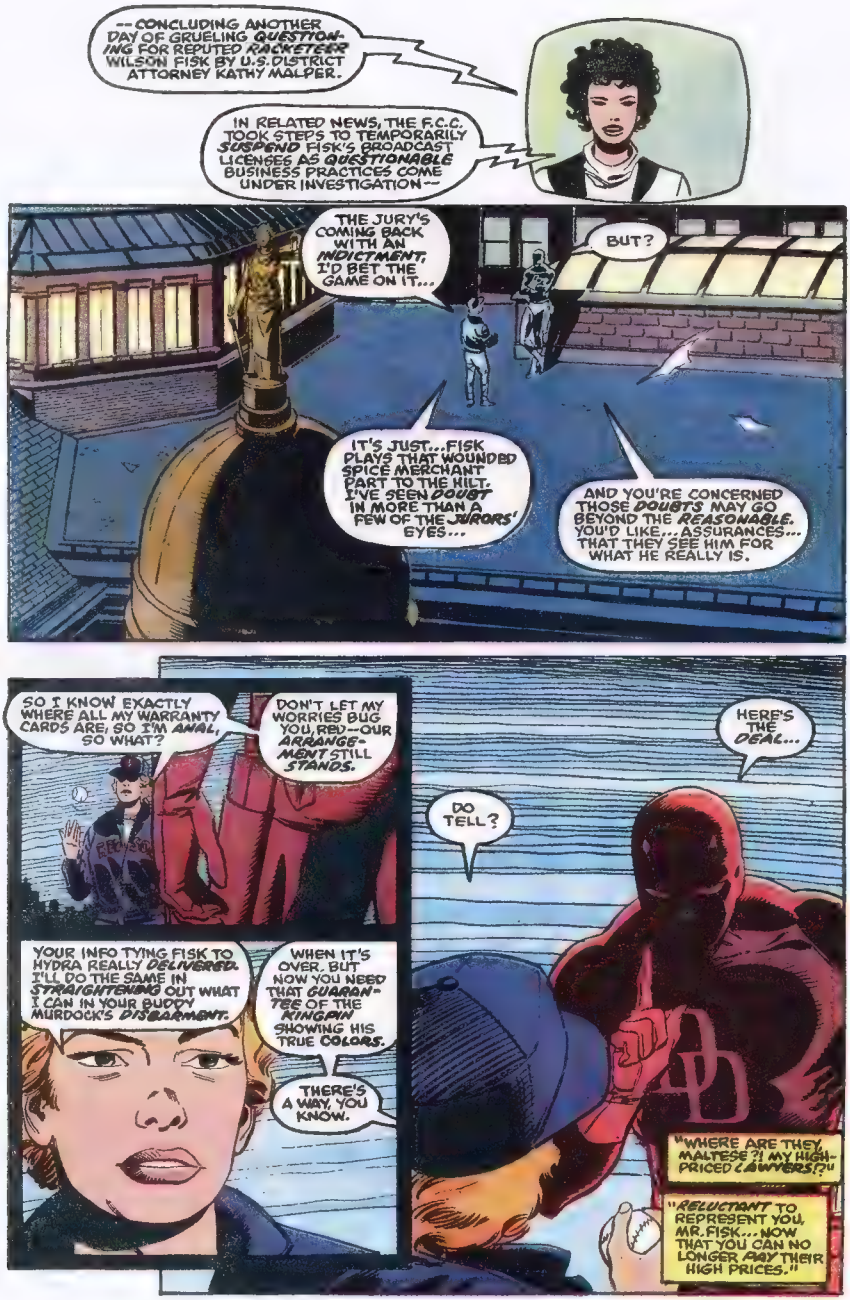
THIS ISN'T A HEARING, MS. MALPER, IT'S AN *INQUISITION!*

AS I'VE EXPLAINED BEFORE--SIR--LEGAL COUNSEL IS NOT PART OF THE GRAND JURY PROCESS.
WHAT A GRAND JURY DOES PROVIDE FOR ARE EXTRAORDINARY EXPLORATORY POWERS IN ORDER TO SEE IF A CRIME HAS BEEN COMMITTED.
IT MAY NOT BE TO YOUR LIKING, BUT I'D HARDLY QUANTIFY IT AN "INQUISITION".
UNLESS YOU SEE A TORTURE RACK THE REST OF US DON'T? A BURNING AT THE STAKE?
OR MAYBE IT'S JUST YOU'RE NOT USED TO FEELING THE HEAT, MR. FISK...
SHE SPEAKS OF HEAT IN THE ABSTRACT. MULLS THE SELF MADE KING OF NEW YORK--
--MADE ON THE BACKS OF COUNTLESS OTHERS--
--BUT AN UNPOPULAR BLUEBERRY CHILD OF 12 KNOWS IT FOR REAL.
COVERED IN DESPERATE ROLDS OF THREADBARE POVERTY, FORMLESS DELUSION THAT CAN NEVER MASK THE SWEATY ROLLS OF FAT BENEATH.
YER SCARED, KID? IT'S OKAY--CAREFUL WITH IT, IT'S FILLED TA DA TOP!
THE CITY HOLDS ITS MEAT IN THE CONCRETE OF ITS BUILDINGS, THE TAR AND COBBLESTONE OF ITS STREETS.
PRESSURE GROWING WITH EVERY RISING DEGREE...
I KNOW WHATCHA THINKIN', WILLIE--T'AT IT'S WRONG, DIS T'ING.
"BUT YA GOTTA SEE THE FINE LINE BETWEEN WHAT'S CRIMINAL...AND WHAT'S BUSINESS!
"THIS SWEATSHOP--IT NEEDS A STRONG UNION TA HELP DA WORKER'S LOT. I CAN MAKE A FEW BUCKS OFF A STRONG UNION...
"...AN' YA CAN MAKE A FEW BUCKS FER YA AN' YERS BY HELPIN' ME KNOW THE NEED FER THAT UNION.
"TA WATCH OUT FER DA WORKERS. AGAINST, Y'KNOW, ACCIDENTS..."

HEY, HEY YOU LITTLE LARDBOTTOM! WHADDA YOU THINK YOU'RE DOIN'?!
UNNG!
G-GIMME THAT!
YOU WANNA START SOMETHIN,' PIGGY-PIGGY, THAT IT'? WHO PUT YOU UP TO THIS, FATTY, WHO?
START TALKIN', 'CAUSE IT'S YOUR BACON'S GONNA GET BURNED NOW!
NO, YOU DON'T KNOW --GIMME THAT!--MY FAMILY, WE NEED--
HUHN?!
A THIEF, TOO! IT'S ON THE LIST, PORKER, IT'S ADDIN' UP!
GIVE IT BACK NOW, GIVE IT HERE!
G-GET AWAY, I ONLY WANTED--IT WAS FOR MY FAMILY!
KLANG
YOU STUPID SNOT-NOSED--
OMIGOD
THERE'S A FLARE OF WHITE HOT AS THE HAMMER REBOUNDS TO STRIKE THE LITTLE FAT BOY'S SKULL--
--MY SKULL--
--AS THE GLOWING TIP OF THE HANDYMAN'S CIGARETTE MEETS THE SPRAY OF GASOLINE.
PRESSURE, GROWING WITH EVERY RISING DEGREE...
...SOMETHING HAS TO GIVE.

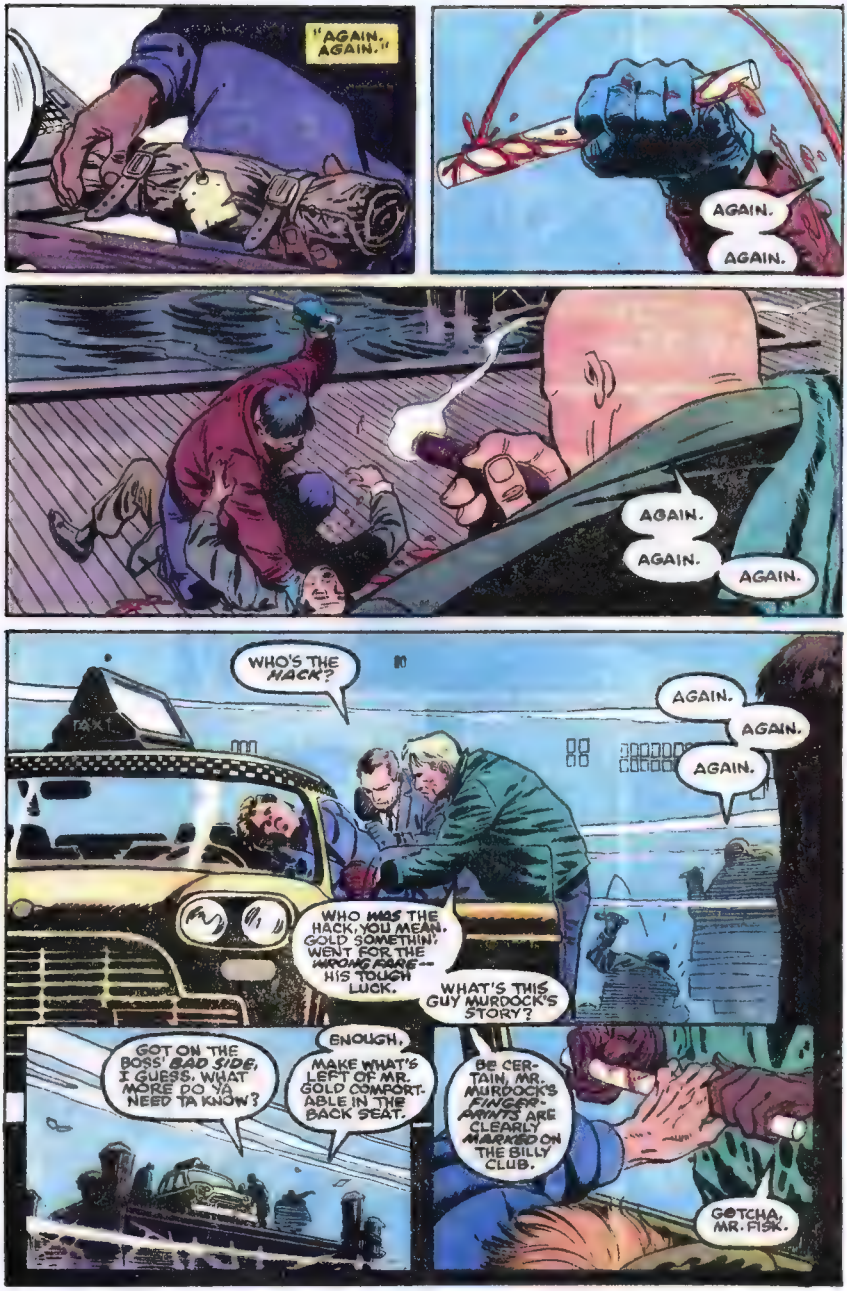

SOMETHING DOES.
THEY RAIN DOWN FROM ABOVE THEM, SOME THROWN BY THE BLAST...
...MOST OF THE WORKERS SO FEARFUL OF THE FLAMES THEY'D RATHER TAKE THEIR CHANCES WITH THE SHATTERING LEAP TO THE STREET BELOW.
RED HUMAN JELLY MIXES WITH THE SOOTY RUNOFF OF THE FIREMAN'S WATER.
A LITTLE FAT BOY COOLS HIS REDDENED BLISTERING HANDS--
--MY HANDS--
--IN THE TEPID RIVER THAT FLOWS INTO THE GUTTER.
GETTING MY HANDS DIRTY.
A LITTLE BLOOD ON A MAN'S HANDS.
D-DID IT... FOR MOM AN' DAD AN' US...
A MARK OF SUCCESS.
I MAKE 15 DOLLARS THAT DAY.
"MR. FISK? MR. FISK?"

MR. FISK?
15 DOLLARS...
WE'LL GET INTO YOUR FINANCIAL DEALINGS SOON ENOUGH --SIR.
THE COURT'S CURRENT INTEREST IS IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO THE TERRORIST GROUP HYDRA AND THEIR CONNECTION TO YOUR BROADCAST STATIONS.
BUT SINCE WE'RE GETTING NOWHERE AT THE MOMENT, THIS MIGHT BE A GOOD TIME FOR A RECESS!
MR. FISK--
THOUGHTS ON THE MAYOR'S COMMENT THAT YOU SHOULD ROT IN--
--CONSPIRING WITH REPUTED DRUG-RUNNERS LIKE NAVATILAS?
--RUMORS OF CIVIL SUITS FROM ACROSS THE CITY--
ARE YOU GOING TO DO GERALDO?
RECESS. FREE TIME.
ENJOY IT WHILE YOU STILL CAN, WILLIE.
MURDOCK.


--CONCLUDING ANOTHER DAY OF GRUELING QUESTIONING FOR REPUTED RACKETEER WILSON FISK BY U.S. DISTRICT ATTORNEY KATHY MALPER.
IN RELATED NEWS, THE F.C.C. TOOK STEPS TO TEMPORARILY SUSPEND FISK'S BROADCAST LICENSES AS QUESTIONABLE BUSINESS PRACTICES COME UNDER INVESTIGATION--
THE JURY'S COMING BACK WITH AN INDICTMENT, I'D BET THE GAME ON IT...
BUT?
IT'S JUST...FISK PLAYS THAT WOUNDED SPICE MERCHANT PART TO THE HILT. I'VE SEEN DOUBT IN MORE THAN A FEW OF THE JURORS' EYES...
AND YOU'RE CONCERNED THOSE DOUBTS MAY GO BEYOND THE REASONABLE. YOU'D LIKE...ASSURANCES... THAT THEY SEE HIM FOR WHAT HE REALLY IS.
SO I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE ALL MY WARRANTY CARDS ARE; SO I'M ANAL, SO WHAT?
DON'T LET MY WORRIES BUG YOU, RED--OUR ARRANGEMENT STILL STANDS.
YOUR INFO TYING FISK TO HYDRA REALLY DELIVERED. I'LL DO THE SAME IN STRAIGHTENING OUT WHAT I CAN IN YOUR BUDDY MURDOCK'S DISBARMENT.
WHEN IT'S OVER, BUT NOW YOU NEED THAT GUARANTEE OF THE NINJAW SHOWING HIS TRUE COLORS.
THERE'S A WAY, YOU KNOW.
DO TELL?
HERE'S THE DEAL...
"WHERE ARE THEY, MALTESE?! MY HIGH-PRICED LAWYERS?!"
"RELUCTANT TO REPRESENT YOU, MR. FISK... NOW THAT YOU CAN NO LONGER PAY THEIR HIGH PRICES."

"WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, MALTESE?"
"ALLIES ARE HARD TO COME BY AT THIS TIME, MR. FISK... BUT THERE'S WORD OF ONE."
A STATE SENATOR, WELL CONNECTED AND WILLING TO PULL A GREAT MANY STRINGS IN YOUR FAVOR. BUT SHE WANTS SOMETHING IN RETURN.
JUSTICE OVER THE UNSOLVED MURDER OF A CAB DRIVER, NAMED JON GOLD, A FAVORITE COUSIN OF THE SENATOR'S.
A CABBIE NAMED...
"I'M FAMILIAR WITH THIS MAN'S... TRAGIC... DEATH--
"--AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHO CAN BE MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR IT!"
TELL THIS SENATOR SHE HAS MY FULL--
I'LL JUST TAKE THAT WHEN YOU'RE READY, SIR.
--HMM? WHAT'S THIS?
A CHECK. YOUR CHECK.
TAVERN ON THE GREEN HAS-- WELCOMED-- YOUR PATRONAGE IN THE PAST, MR. FISK, BUT THERE IS THE MATTER OF YOUR OUTSTANDING TAB.
IT'S QUITE SUBSTANTIAL... AND PAYMENT'S DUE.
YES, PAYMENT'S DUE...
...AND THEN SOME...

FOUR TRIES TO FIND THE RIGHT SUBWAY TO PORT AUTHORITY BUS STATION, WILSON FISK RUMBLES TO HIMSELF...
Subway
...BUT THEN, MASS TRANSIT ISN'T MY FORTE.
THE LIMOUSINE IS STILL AVAILABLE--
--STILL. MY. CITY.--
--BUT THIS WAS SOMETHING THAT HAD TO BE DONE ALONE. A SECRET THING, A SCHEMING THING.
Markbo
J. JONAH JAMESON SAYS KINGPIN SHOULD DO HARD TIME! READ IT IN THE BUGLE!
ALONE. JUST AS I LEFT IT TO GROW AND RIPEN IN THE FERTILE FILTH OF THIS INNER-CITY THIRD WORLD.
WAITING FOR A HARVEST THAT WILL PROCLAIM MY REDEMPTION--
I'M PICKING UP--
GIVE WITH THE CLAIM SLIP!
--AN HONEST CITIZEN COMING FORWARD WITH EVIDENCE OF A HEINOUS CRIME--
rcel Check
CHILL!
TAP
TAP
TAP
--AND WILL ENSURE MATT MURDOCK'S DAMNATION.

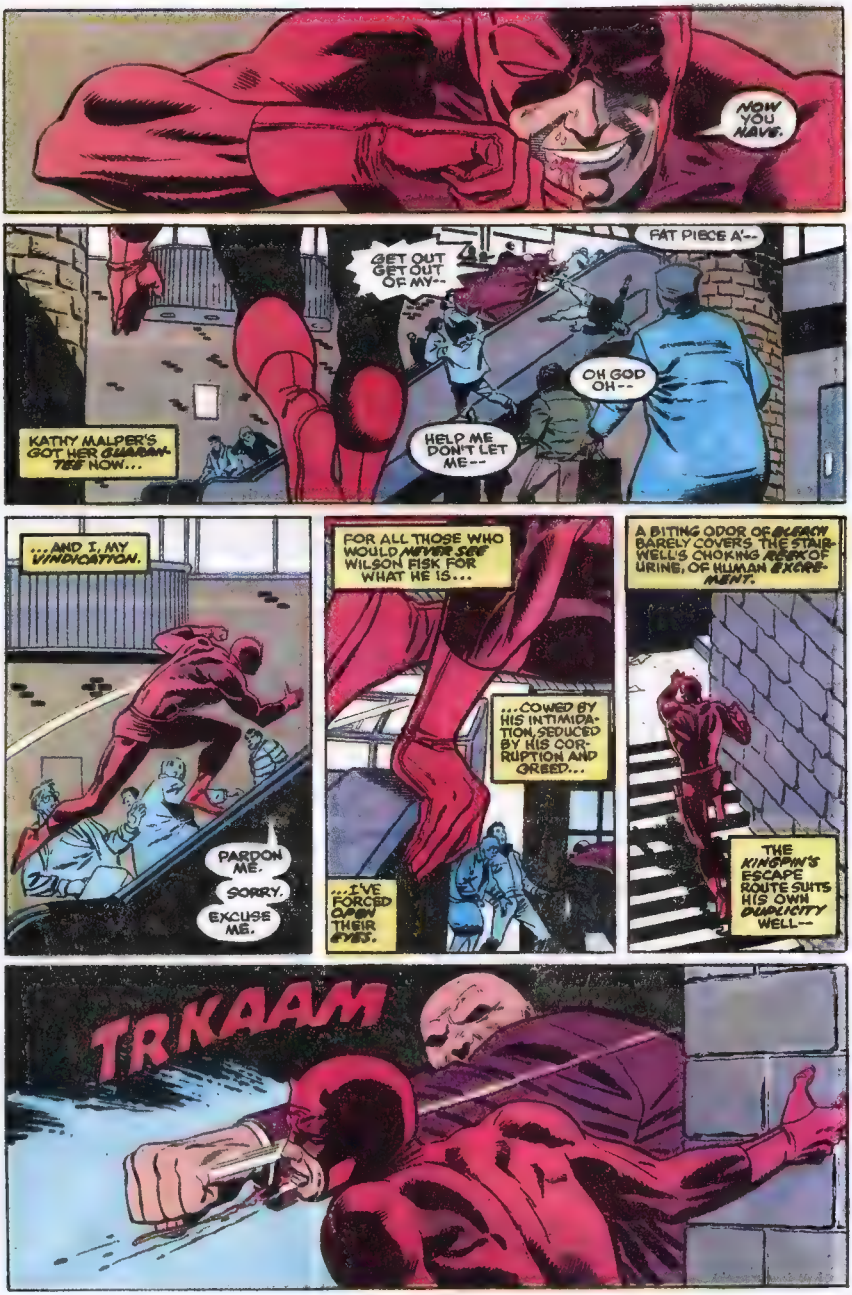

"AGAIN. AGAIN."
AGAIN.
AGAIN.
AGAIN.
AGAIN.
AGAIN.
WHO'S THE HACK?
AGAIN.
AGAIN.
AGAIN.
WHO WAS THE HACK, YOU MEAN. GOLD SOMETHIN' WENT FOR THE WRONG FACE -- HIS TOUGH LUCK.
WHAT'S THIS GUY MURDOCK'S STORY?
GOT ON THE BOSS' BAD SIDE, I GUESS. WHAT MORE DO YA NEED TA KNOW?
ENOUGH.
MAKE WHAT'S LEFT OF MR. GOLD COMFORTABLE IN THE BACK SEAT.
BE CERTAIN, MR. MURDOCK'S FINGERPRINTS ARE CLEARLY MARKED ON THE BILLY CLUB.
GOTCHA, MR. FISK.

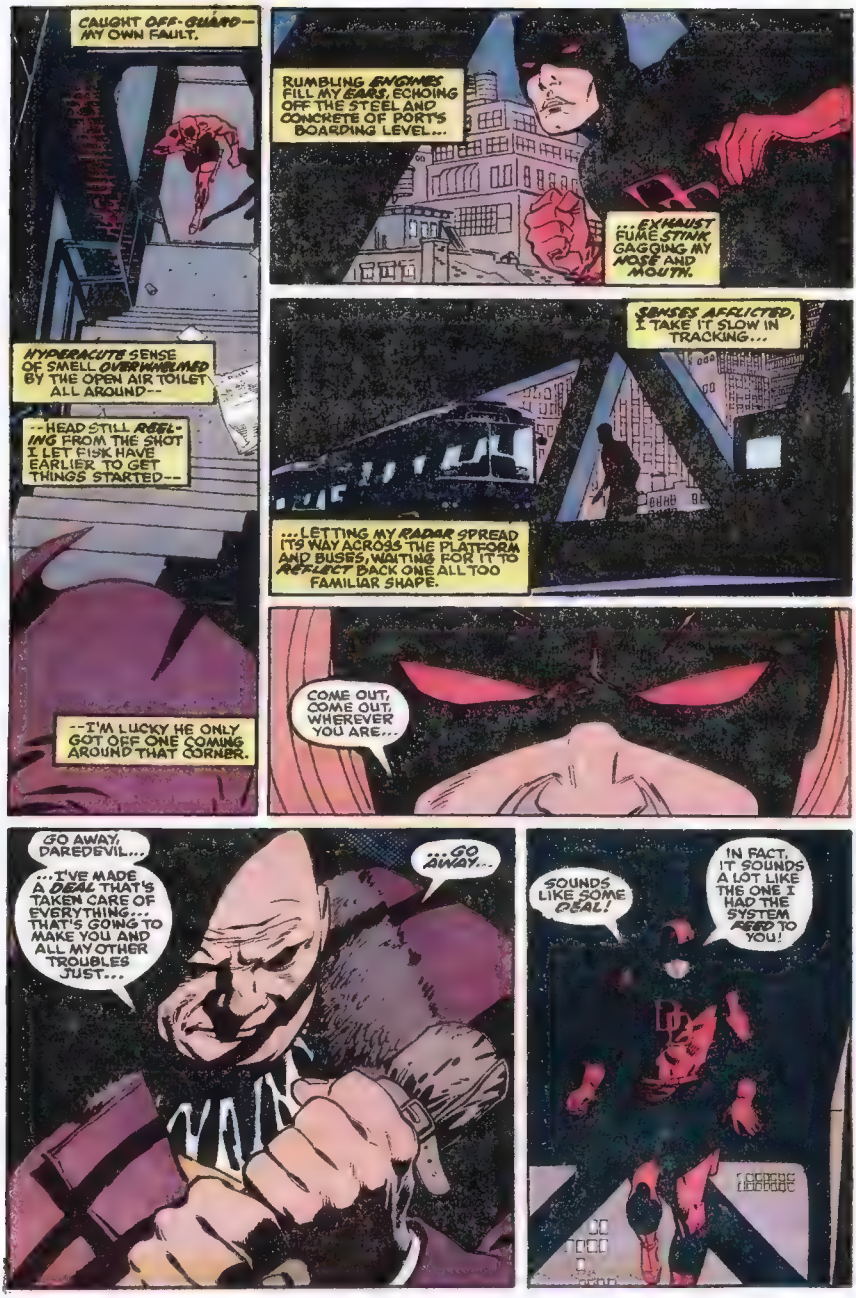
DOORS SET?
SEALED SHUT WITH THAT STUFF THAT LOOKS LIKE RUST.
ON THREE, THEN--
THRNK
SPLKAASH
WHAT'S THE GOOD A' HAVIN' THIS GUY'S BOOTS, BOSS? WHAT WITH HIM BEIN' AT THE BOTTOM A' THE RIVER AN' ALL?
THIS MURDOCK BROKE BASILY UNDER THE STRAIN OF THE DISGRACE I MADE OF HIS CAREER, OF HIS VERY EXISTENCE.
STILL A MAN'S REPUTATION--NO MATTER HOW PATHETIC--LIVES ON AFTER HE'S GONE. AND CAN BE FURTHER SHAMED AND SCANDALIZED.
IT'S GOOD BECAUSE IT CAN DO THESE THINGS TO WHAT LITTLE REMAINS OF MATTHEW MURDOCK'S NAME.
IT'S GOOD...TO AMUSE MYSELF...
"YOU MAY HAVE SURVIVED THAT CAB, MURDOCK..."

...BUT WHO'S LAUGHING NOW?
GIVE THAT HERE!
CHILL! BEEN SITTIN' IN THE BACK SO LONG, WHAT'S WITH THE RUSH ON IT NOW, MAN?
GIVE WITH THE DEAD PRESIDENTS YOU WANT THE GOODS!
FIVE HUNDRED FIFTY IN STORAGE AND LATE CHARGES!
I DON'T-- I DON'T HAVE THAT MUCH CASH ON ME. IT'LL HAVE TO BE CREDIT.
TAKE ALL TYPES! AMEX, MASTERCARD, VISA--
--GIVE WITH THE PLASTIC!
A HYPERACTIVE SENSE OF SMELL CUTS RIGHT THROUGH THE RICH AROMA OF THE SATCHEL'S CRACKED LEATHER TO WHAT HIDES WITHIN.
HO...
KINGPIN.
WHAT'S IN THAT SATCHEL BELONGS TO ME--HAND IT OVER AND THERE WON'T BE ANY TROUBLE.
YOUR MARGINALLY TOLERATED VIGILANTISM IS USELESS HERE, DAREDEVIL!
PARCEL ROOM
THE REEK OF YEARS-OLD SKIN OILS AND SWEAT--
--MINE--
--CLINGING TO A LENGTH OF WOOD SOAKED IN THE CONGEALED STENCH OF A DEAD CABBIE'S DRIED BLOOD.

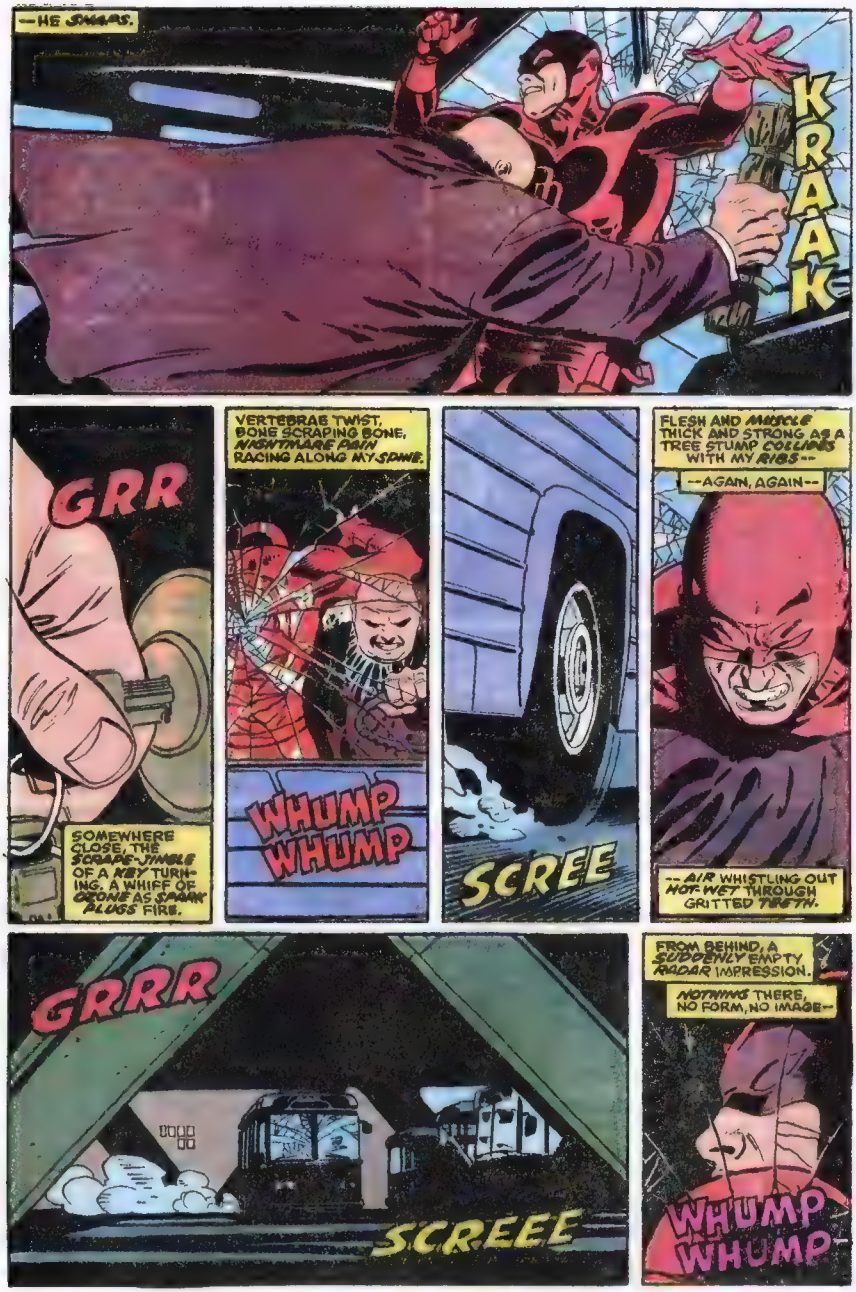
I'VE DONE NOTHING WRONG.
SOMETHING LOW AND GUTTURAL MAKES ITSELF KNOWN IN THE BACK OF WILSON FISK'S THROAT.
NOT WHAT THE PLASTIC PEOPLE SAY, MAN-- YOUR CARD'S BEEN REJECTED!
NO...IT'S MINE! I TELL YOU! I NEED IT!
GIVE IT HERE!
CRAZY MOTHER--
SOME THING IN THE HIGH SHRIEK OF SHATTERING GLASS, IN THE PRIMAL DRUM OF HIS HEARTBEAT, BREAKING THROUGH THE FACADE OF THE "HONEST-AND-MISUNDERSTOOD BUSINESSMAN"...
TRUE COLORS. THE FACE BEHIND THE MASK.
HNNGH!
IN THE JUNGLE HOT SINK OF SWEAT AND ADRENALINE, A PREDATOR WHO WOULD FEED ON A CITY...
I'VE-- I'VE DONE--

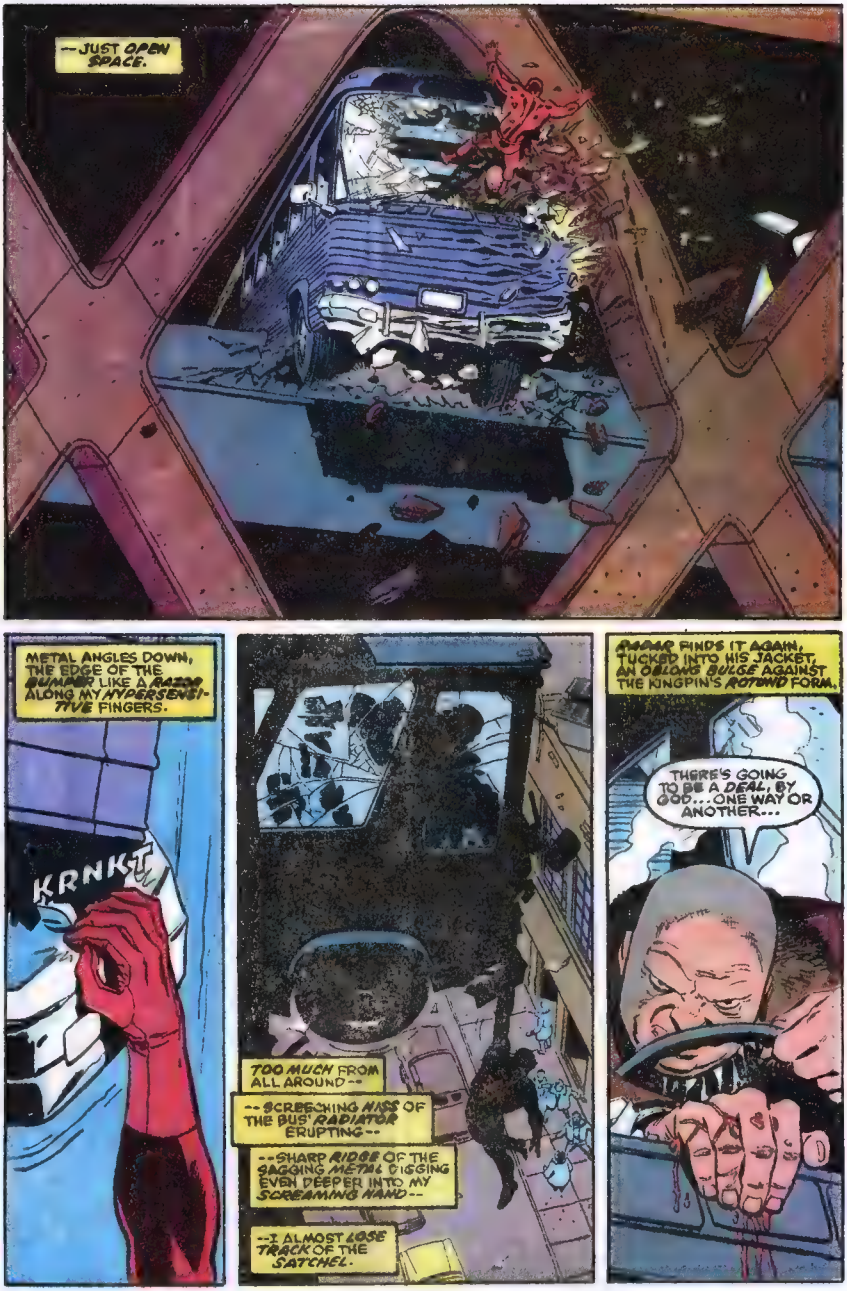
...AN ANIMAL ON THE LOOSE
THRAAK
I'VE! DONE! NOTHING! WRONG!

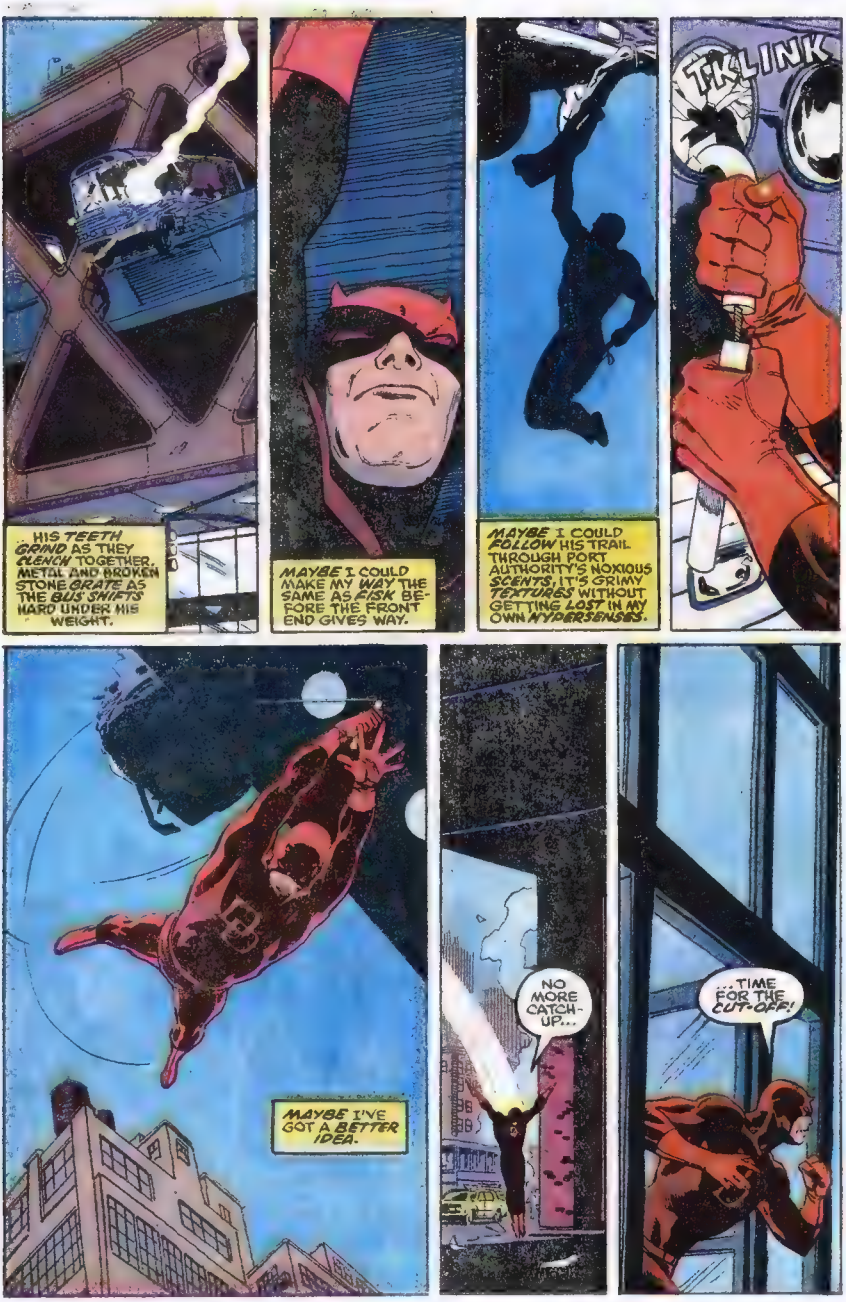

NOW YOU HAVE.
KATHY MALPER'S GOT HER GUARDIAN-TEE NOW...
GET OUT GET OUT OF MY--
FAT PIECE A'--
OH GOD OH--
HELP ME DON'T LET ME--
...AND I, MY VINDICATION.
PARDON ME.
SORRY.
EXCUSE ME.
FOR ALL THOSE WHO WOULD NEVER SEE WILSON FISK FOR WHAT HE IS...
...COWED BY HIS INTIMIDATION, SEDUCED BY HIS CORRUPTION AND GREED...
...I'VE FORCED OPEN THEIR EYES.
A BITING ODOR OF BLEACH BARELY COVERS THE STAIRWELL'S CHOKING REEK OF URINE, OF HUMAN EXCREMENT.
THE KINGPIN'S ESCAPE ROUTE SUITS HIS OWN DUPLICITY WELL--
TRKAAM

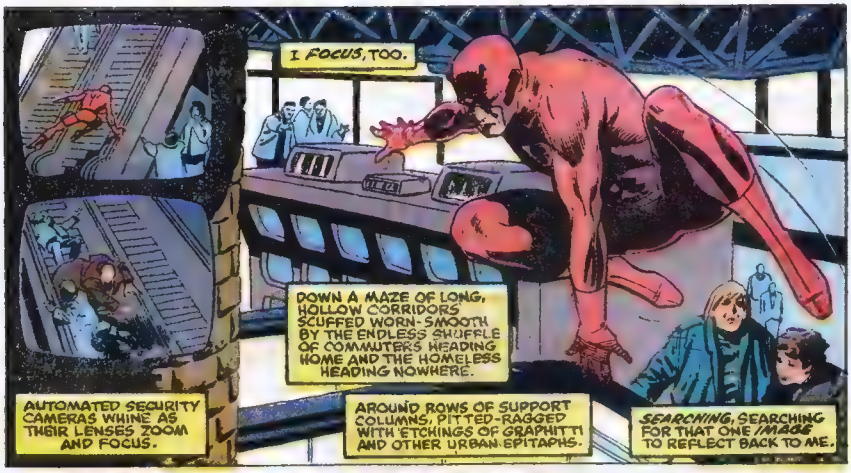

CAUGHT OFF-GUARD--MY OWN FAULT.
HYPERACUTE SENSE OF SMELL OVERWHELMED BY THE OPEN AIR TOILET ALL AROUND--
--HEAD STILL REELING FROM THE SHOT I LET FISK HAVE EARLIER TO GET THINGS STARTED--
--I'M LUCKY HE ONLY GOT OFF ONE COMING AROUND THAT CORNER.
RUMBLING ENGINES FILL MY EARS, ECHOING OFF THE STEEL AND CONCRETE OF PORT'S BOARDING LEVEL...
...EXHAUST FUME STINK GAGGING MY NOSE AND MOUTH.
SENSES AFFLICTED, I TAKE IT SLOW IN TRACKING...
...LETTING MY RADAR SPREAD IT'S WAY ACROSS THE PLATFORM AND BUSES, WAITING FOR IT TO REFLECT BACK ONE ALL TOO FAMILIAR SHAPE.
COME OUT, COME OUT, WHEREVER YOU ARE...
GO AWAY, DAREDEVIL...
...I'VE MADE A DEAL THAT'S TAKEN CARE OF EVERYTHING... THAT'S GOING TO MAKE YOU AND ALL MY OTHER TROUBLES JUST...
...GO AWAY...
SOUNDS LIKE SOME DEAL!
IN FACT, IT SOUNDS A LOT LIKE THE ONE I HAD THE SYSTEM REED TO YOU!

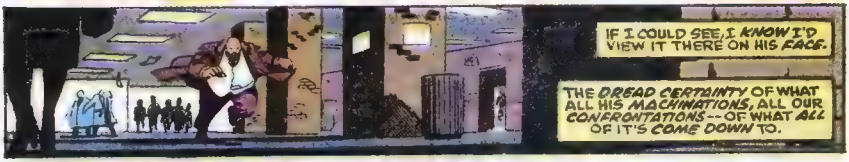
AND TRUE TO BLOATED FORM, YOU GOBBLED IT UP!
IT'S NOT TRUE, THAT'S NOT--THERE IS A DEAL, IT'S--
DID YOU THINK I WAS GOING TO LET YOU KEEP HOLD OF SOMETHING YOU WOULD USE TO FRAME ME FOR A MAN'S MURDER?
DID YOU THINK I WAS GOING TO LET YOU SCREW UP MY LIFE ONE MORE TIME?
THINK AGAIN.
YOU LED ME RIGHT TO IT... AND JUST LOOK AT YOURSELF.
THE MAN WHO HAD BEEN KING, HIDING OUT LIKE A COMMON CRIMINAL.
THERE'S A SENATOR, AND HER DEAD COUSIN, AND SHE'S, THE SENATOR, SHE'S GOING TO--
WHAT WOULD VANESSA THINK OF YOU NOW?
LEAVE HER-- LEAVE HER OUT OF THIS!
REMINDING FISK OF HIS ESTRANGED WIFE HAD PROVIDED THE FIRST CHINK IN HIS CONSIDERABLE ARMOR.
BRINGING HER UP ANEW COULD HAVE PROVIDED THE BREAKING POINT FOR THE STRAIN I'VE ENGINEERED UPON THE BIG MAN'S STRUCTURE...
THE KINGPIN DOESN'T BREAK--


--HE SNARS.
KRAAK
GRR
SOMEWHERE CLOSE, THE SCRAPE-JINGLE OF A KEY TURNING. A WHIFF OF OZONE AS SPARK PLUGS FIRE.
VERTEBRAE TWIST, BONE SCRAPING BONE, NIGHTMARE PAIN RACING ALONG MY SPINE.
WHUMP WHUMP
SCREE
FLESH AND MUSCLE THICK AND STRONG AS A TREE STUMP COLLIDES WITH MY RIBS--
--AGAIN, AGAIN--
-- AIR WHISTLING OUT NOT-WET THROUGH GRITTED TEETH.
GRRR
SCREEE
FROM BEHIND, A SUDDENLY EMPTY RADAR IMPRESSION.
NOTHING THERE, NO FORM, NO IMAGE--
WHUMP WHUMP

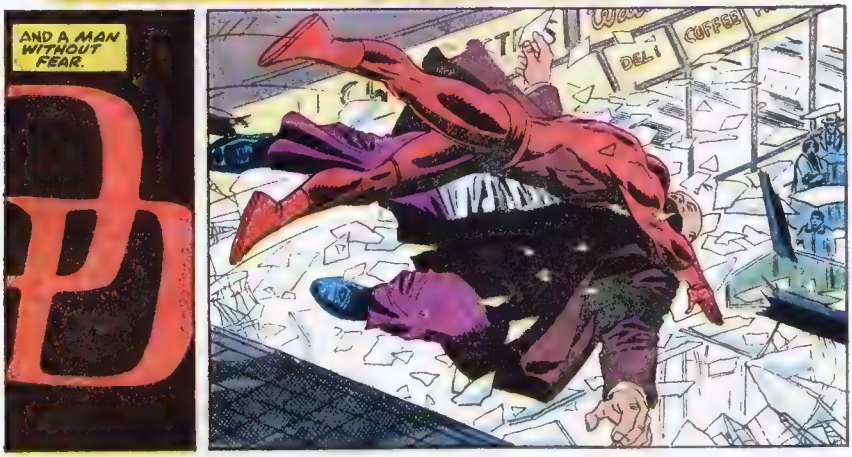

--JUST OPEN SPACE.
METAL ANGLES DOWN, THE EDGE OF THE BUMPER LIKE A RAZOR ALONG MY HYPERSENSITIVE FINGERS.
KRNKT
TOO MUCH FROM ALL AROUND--
--SCREECHING HISS OF THE BUS' RADIATOR ERUPTING--
--SHARP RIDGE OF THE GAGGING METAL DIGGING EVEN DEEPER INTO MY SCREAMING HAND--
--I ALMOST LOSE TRACK OF THE SATCHEL.
AHAH FINDS IT AGAIN, TUCKED INTO HIS JACKET, AN OBLONG BULGE AGAINST THE KINGPIN'S ROTUND FORM.
THERE'S GOING TO BE A DEAL, BY GOD... ONE WAY OR ANOTHER...

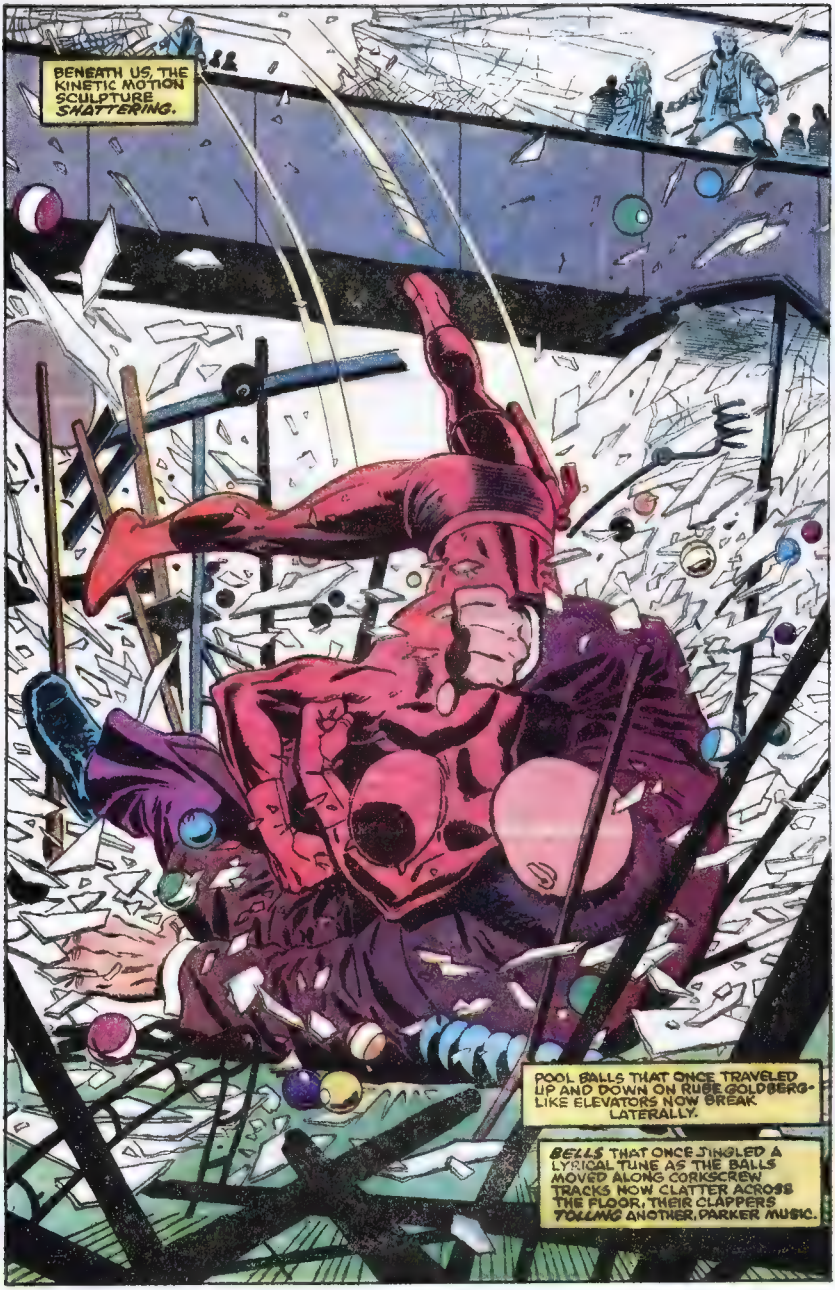

HIS TEETH GRIND AS THEY CLENCH TOGETHER. METAL AND BROKEN STONE GRATE AS THE BUS SHIFTS HARD UNDER HIS WEIGHT.
MAYBE I COULD MAKE MY WAY THE SAME AS FISK BEFORE THE FRONT END GIVES WAY.
MAYBE I COULD FOLLOW HIS TRAIL THROUGH PORT AUTHORITY'S NOXIOUS SCENTS. IT'S GRIMY TEXTURES WITHOUT GETTING LOST IN MY OWN HYPERSENSES.
TK-LINK
MAYBE I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA.
NO MORE CATCH-UP...
...TIME FOR THE CUT-OFF!


I FOCUS, TOO.
DOWN A MAZE OF LONG, HOLLOW CORRIDORS SCUFFED WORN-SMOOTH BY THE ENDLESS SHUFFLE OF COMMUTERS HEADING HOME AND THE HOMELESS HEADING NOWHERE.
AUTOMATED SECURITY CAMERAS WHINE AS THEIR LENSES ZOOM AND FOCUS.
AROUND ROWS OF SUPPORT COLUMNS, PITTED-RAGGED WITH ETCHINGS OF GRAPHITTI AND OTHER URBAN EPITAPHS.
SEARCHING, SEARCHING FOR THAT ONE IMAGE TO REFLECT BACK TO ME.


IF I COULD SEE, I KNOW I'D VIEW IT THERE ON HIS FACE.
THE DREAD CERTAINTY OF WHAT ALL HIS MACHINATIONS, ALL OUR CONFRONTATIONS -- OF WHAT ALL OF IT'S COME DOWN TO.

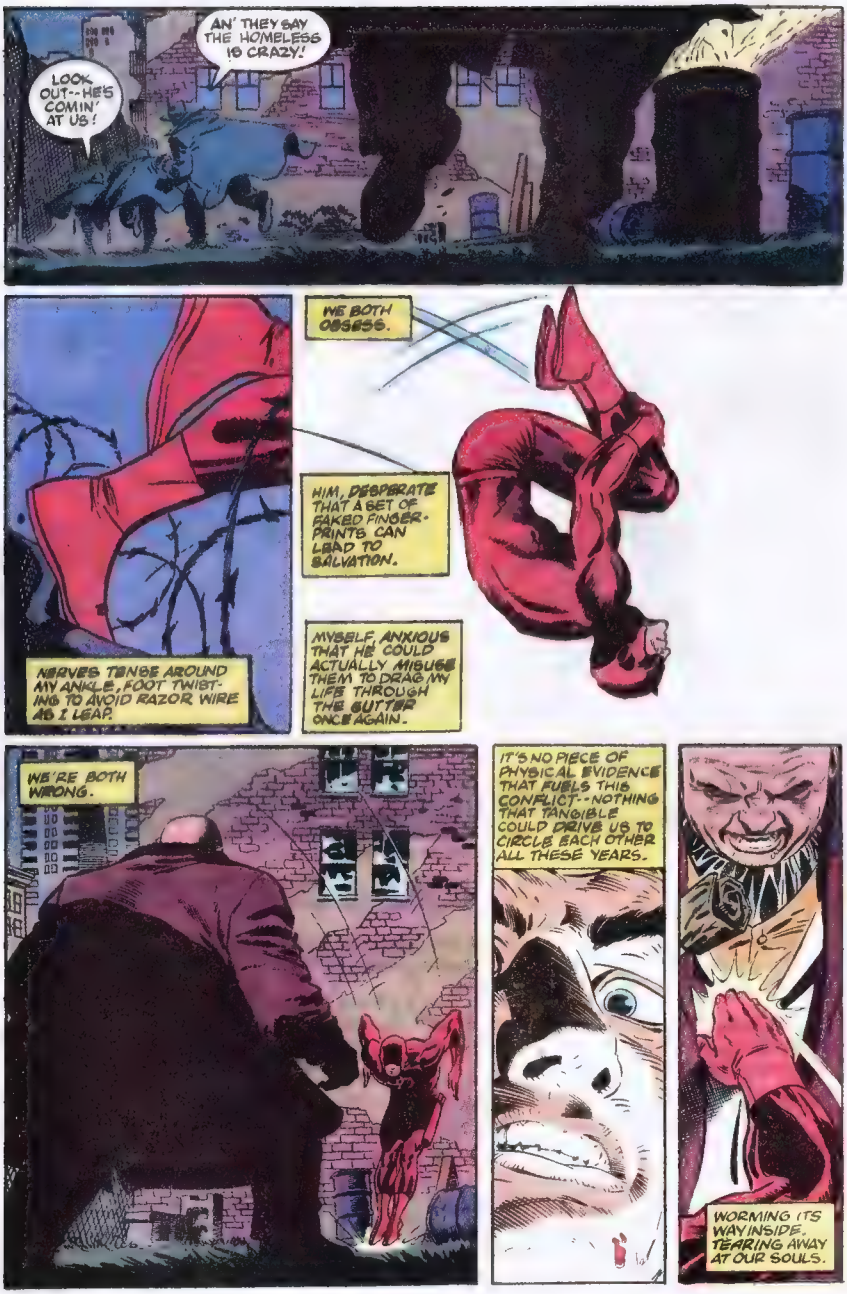
A MAN FILLED WITH PANIC.


AND A MAN WITHOUT FEAR.
DEL
COFFEE

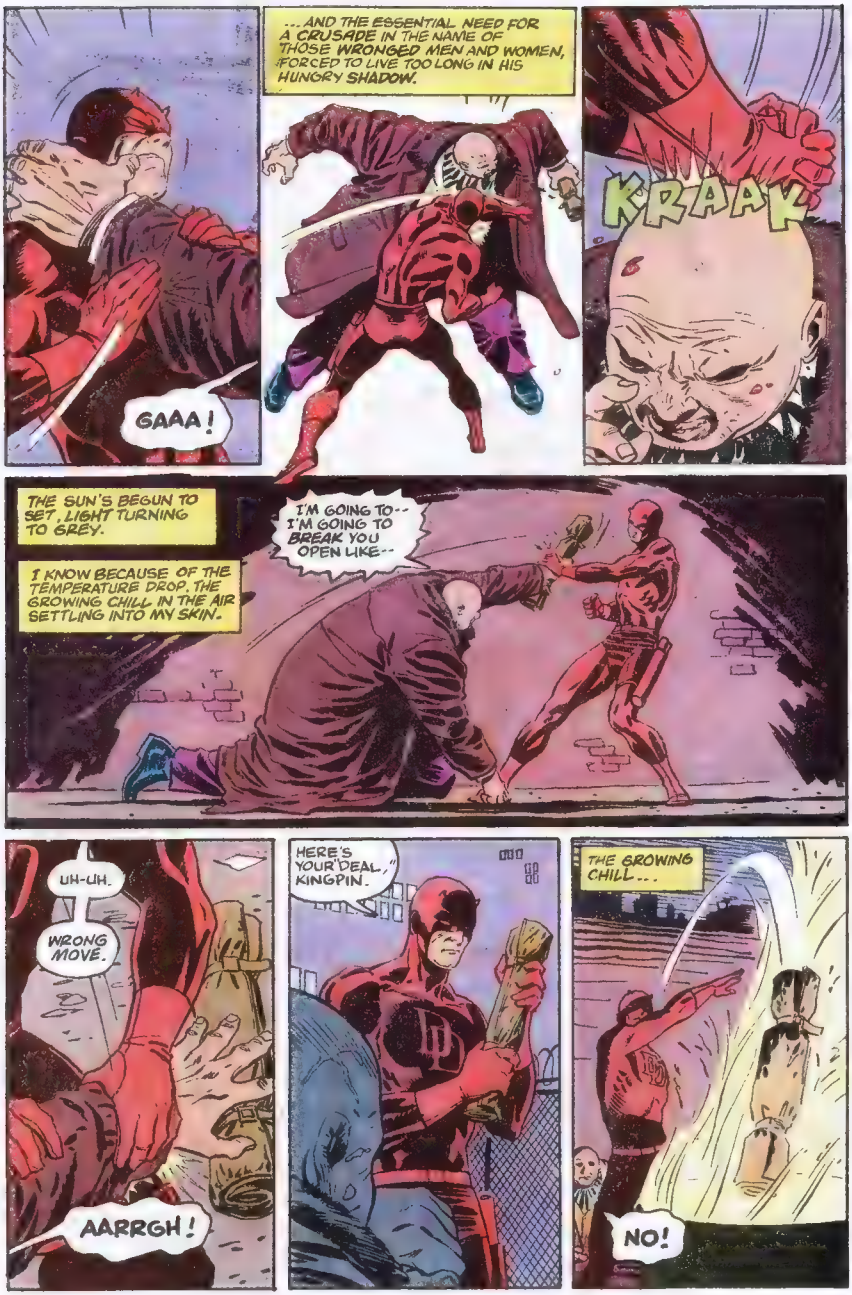

BENEATH US, THE KINETIC MOTION SCULPTURE *SHATTERING.*
POOL BALLS THAT ONCE TRAVELED UP AND DOWN ON RUBE GOLDBERG-LIKE ELEVATORS NOW BREAK LATERALLY.
BELLS THAT ONCE JINGLED A LYRICAL TUNE AS THE BALLS MOVED ALONG CORKSCREW TRACKS NOW CLATTER ACROSS THE FLOOR, THEIR CLAPPERS *TOLLING* ANOTHER, DARKER MUSIC.

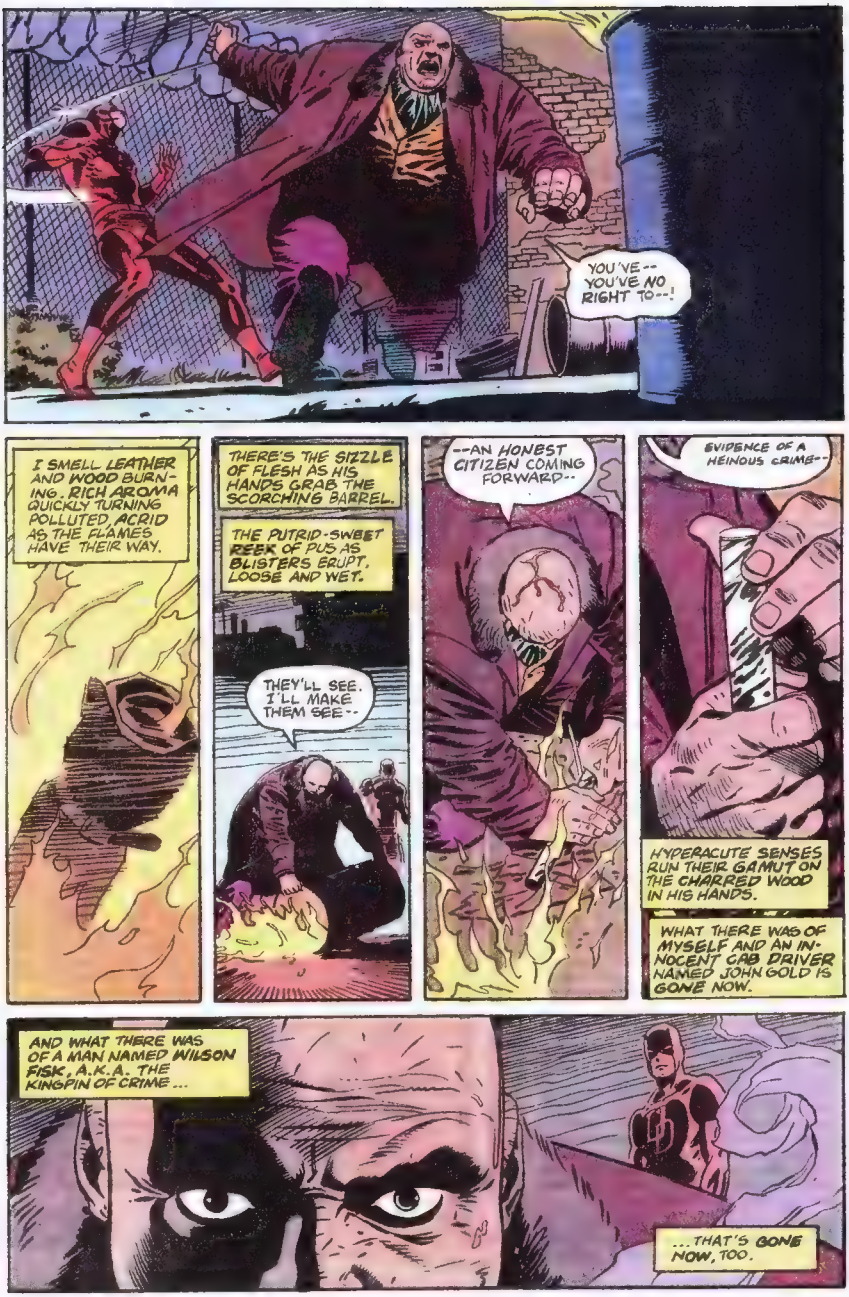
FISK STUMBLES, AWKWARD. IT'S NOT A WAY OF GETTING THROUGH LIFE HE'S ACCUSTOMED TO.
HE'LL GET USED TO IT.
HE MUMBLES SOMETHING ABOUT SENATORS AND COUSINS AND MAKING DEALS.
IF IT WERE ANYONE ELSE, I MIGHT EVEN FEEL PITY.
FROM THREE HUNDRED AND SIXTY DEGREES AT ONCE I KNOW EACH ROLLING BALL UNDERFOOT, WHERE THEY ARE, WHERE THEY'RE GOING.
WHILE THE KINGPIN LURCHES AMONG THE DEBRIS, STAGGERING--
--I DANCE.
IN THE CROWD, A VOICE I RECOGNIZE AS BELONGING TO PHOTOJOURNALIST PETER PARKER...
...AMONG OTHER IDENTITIES.
PETER! SHOULDN'T YOU BE DOING-- THAT THING, YOU KNOW?-- THAT FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD SPIDER--
S'OKAY, MARY JANE-- THE MAN'S GOT IT UNDER CONTROL!
NOW GIVE 'IM ONE FOR ME, HORNHEAD!
THE CLICK-WHIRR OF HIS CAMERA AS IT TAKES A PICTURE OF THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES.

FISK'S HEARTBEAT RACES WITH CONFUSION--A "KING" WHO'S FORGOTTEN HIS KINGDOM.
PEDESTRIANS AHEAD
WHICH--WHICH WAY--?
IT'S MORE NOW THAN JUST A MATTER OF NOT BEING FAMILAR WITH FORTY-FIRST STREET OR THE WEST SIDE OR MIDTOWN.
THEY'LL DEAL--I'M GOING TO GIVE THEM A MURDERER AND THEN THEY'LL--
--THEY'LL SEE--
IT'S ABOUT BEING LOST.
UTTERLY LOST.
--SEE I'M ABOVE WHAT THEY'D PUT ME THROUGH!
BIG ONE, CHUCKSTER. WHAT'S HE DOIN'?!
DON'T POINT, FOOL! CAN'T YOU SEE HIS EYES? HE GOT THEM WILD EYES!
SEEING'S NOT ONE OF MY STRONG POINTS, WILLIE...


LOOK OUT--HE'S COMIN' AT US!
AN' THEY SAY THE HOMELESS IS CRAZY!
NERVES TENSE AROUND MY ANKLE, FOOT TWISTING TO AVOID RAZOR WIRE AS I LEAP.
WE BOTH OBSESS.
HIM, DESPERATE THAT A SET OF FAKED FINGERPRINTS CAN LEAD TO SALVATION.
MYSELF, ANXIOUS THAT HE COULD ACTUALLY MISUSE THEM TO DRAG MY LIFE THROUGH THE GUTTER ONCE AGAIN.
WE'RE BOTH WRONG.
IT'S NO PIECE OF PHYSICAL EVIDENCE THAT FUELS THIS CONFLICT--NOTHING THAT TANGIBLE COULD DRIVE US TO CIRCLE EACH OTHER ALL THESE YEARS.
WORMING ITS WAY INSIDE, TEARING AWAY AT OUR SOULS.

WHAT IT IS EATS AWAY THE CONVENIENT DELUSIONS OF A TWISTED EQUILIBRIUM--
--GOOD AND EVIL IN A "NECESSARY BALANCE"--
--AND LEAVES THE WAY CLEAR FOR THE HARSH REALITY.
AS REAL AS HIS SHORT BREATHS, RAGGED AND GASPING, WINDED FROM THE CHASE.
AS REAL AS THE CUTS AND BRUISES I FEEL CRISS-CROSSING MY BODY, HYPER-SENSITIVE PAIN I STRUGGLE TO FOCUS PAST.
HNNGH!
WON'T LET YOU--
A BLACK AND WHITE VIEW OF A THUG OPERATING UNDER THE AUSPICE OF A MODERN DAY FEUDAL LORD, DEMANDING BASE TRIBUTE FROM WHAT HE'S ARROGANTLY CONSIDERED SUBJECTS...

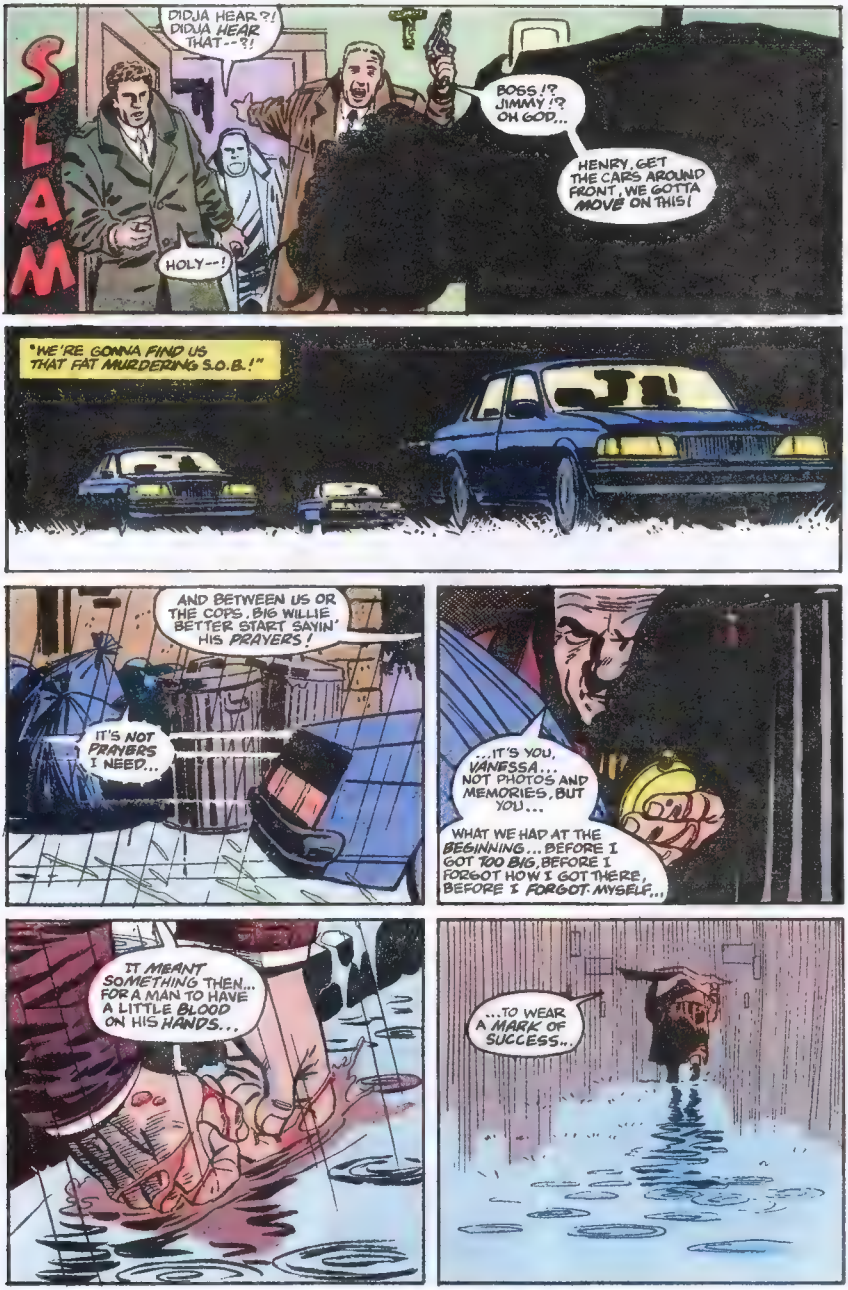

GAAA!
...AND THE ESSENTIAL NEED FOR A CRUSADE IN THE NAME OF THOSE WRONGED MEN AND WOMEN, FORCED TO LIVE TOO LONG IN HIS HUNGRY SHADOW.
KRAAK
THE SUN'S BEGUN TO SET, LIGHT TURNING TO GREY.
I KNOW BECAUSE OF THE TEMPERATURE DROP. THE GROWING CHILL IN THE AIR SETTLING INTO MY SKIN.
I'M GOING TO-- I'M GOING TO BREAK YOU OPEN LIKE--
UH-UH.
WRONG MOVE.
AARRGH!
HERE'S YOUR DEAL," KINGPIN.
THE GROWING CHILL...
NO!

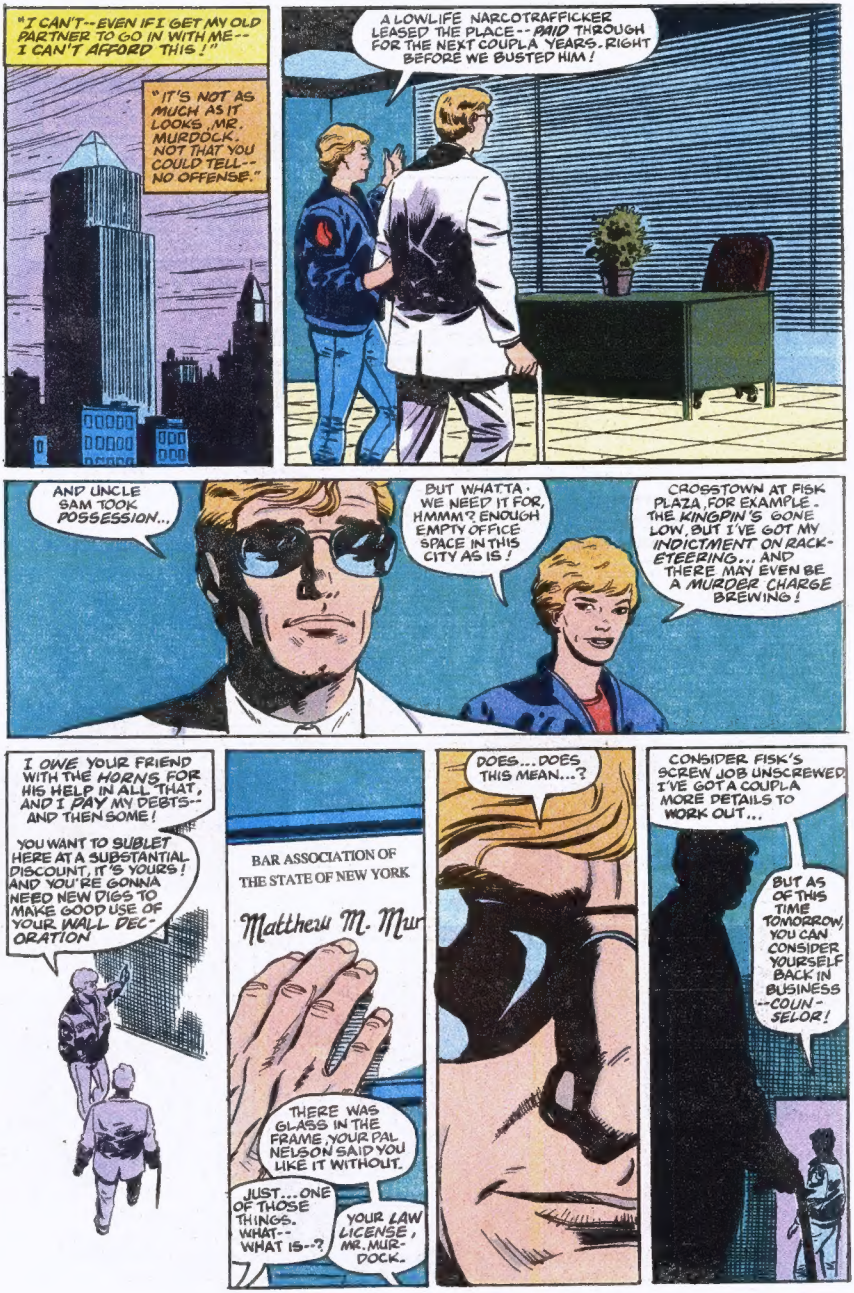

YOU'VE -- YOU'VE NO RIGHT TO--!
I SMELL LEATHER AND WOOD BURNING. RICH AROMA QUICKLY TURNING POLLUTED, ACRID AS THE FLAMES HAVE THEIR WAY.
THERE'S THE SIZZLE OF FLESH AS HIS HANDS GRAB THE SCORCHING BARREL.
THE PUTRID-SWEET REEK OF PUS AS BLISTERS ERUPT, LOOSE AND WET.
THEY'LL SEE. I'LL MAKE THEM SEE--
--AN HONEST CITIZEN COMING FORWARD--
EVIDENCE OF A HEINOUS CRIME--
HYPERACUTE SENSES RUN THEIR GAMUT ON THE CHARRED WOOD IN HIS HANDS.
WHAT THERE WAS OF MYSELF AND AN INNOCENT CAB DRIVER NAMED JOHN GOLD IS GONE NOW.
AND WHAT THERE WAS OF A MAN NAMED WILSON FISK, A.K.A. THE KINGPIN OF CRIME...
...THAT'S GONE NOW, TOO.

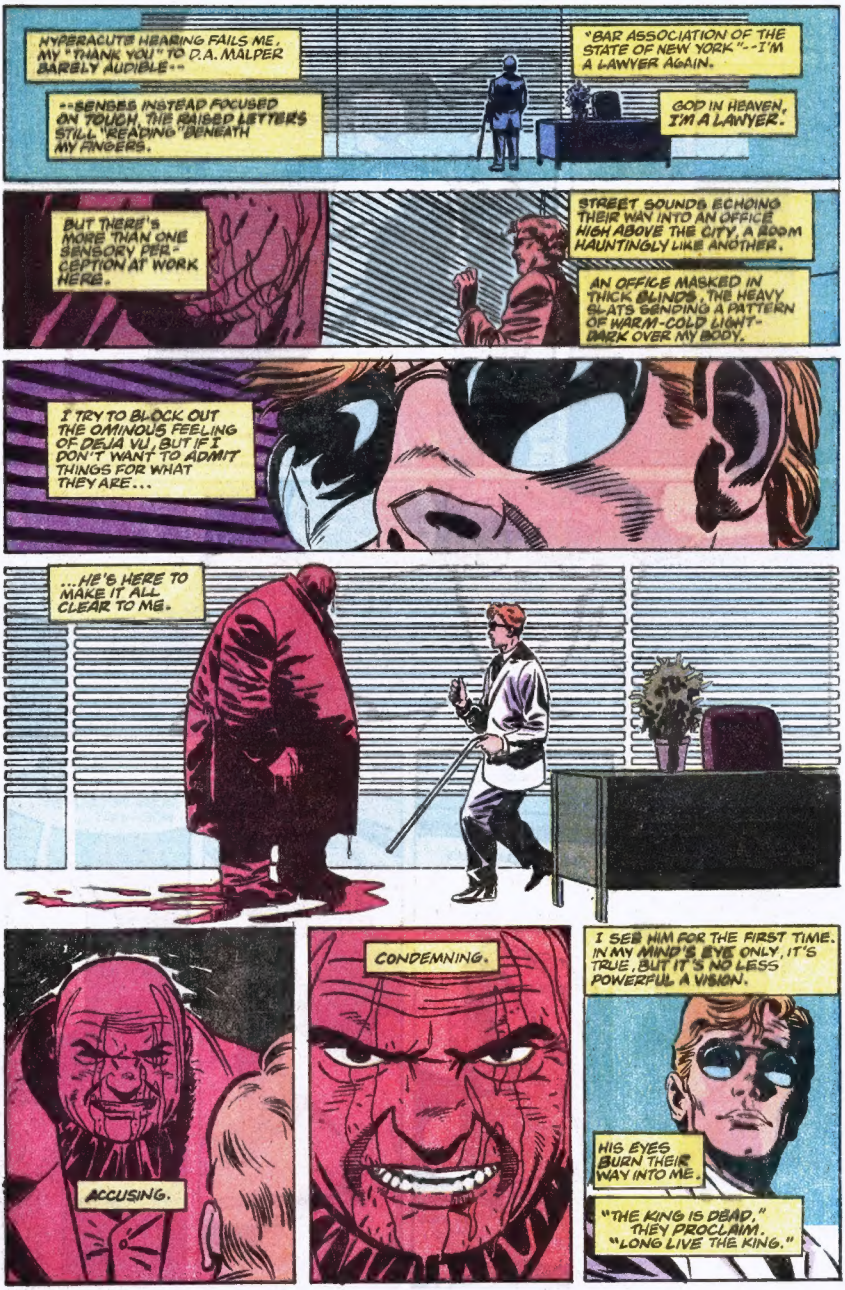
THE WORDS DON'T COME EASY--
--BUT ULTIMATELY, THEY MUST COME.
LEAVE IT UNSAID, RISK DWELLING ON THE EVIL THIS MAN'S DONE--
--THE INJURIES HE'S BROUGHT DOWN ON MY LIFE, ONTO OTHERS--
--AND THE ROAD TRAVELLED IS ONE OF BITTERNESS, OF REVENGE.
BUT LET GO OF THE HATE, RISE ABOVE IT, AND MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING WORTHWHILE THAT CAN PROVIDE THE INNER DRIVE.
MAYBE THEN THERE'S HOPE FOR SOMETHING NOBLE.
I FORGIVE YOU...
THE WORDS DON'T COME EASY.

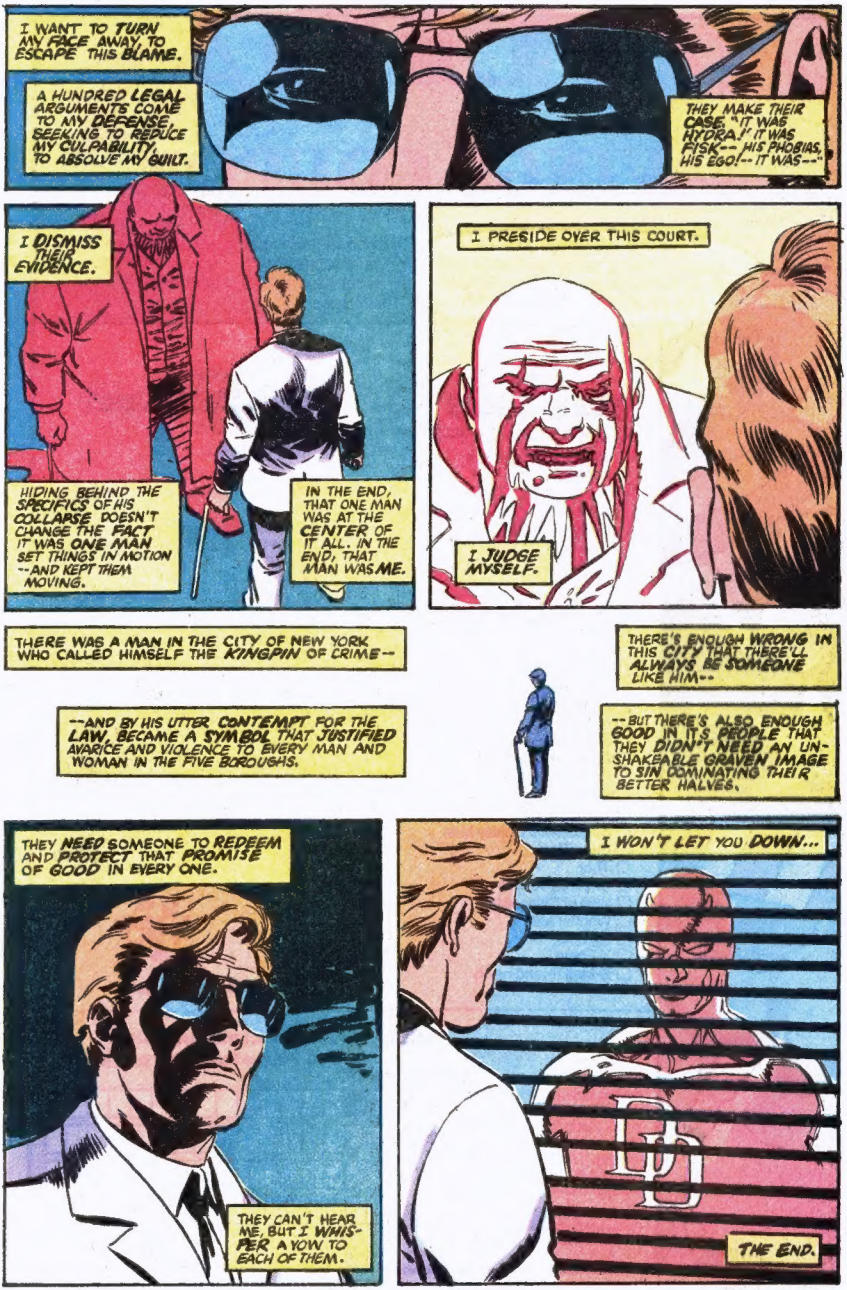
KINGPIN OUT ON BAIL
MR. FISK--HOW YA DOIN'? YOU GET EVERYTHIN' THERE--YOUR STICK, YOUR OTHER THINGS? I HAD MY BOYS GET 'EM FROM THAT MALTESE A' YOURS!
SABINI...
I WANT SO THAT YOU'RE FEELIN' COMFORTABLE, YA KNOW, LIKE THIS IS A HOME AWAY FROM WHILE WE WORK OUT THESE, UH, DIFFICULTIES A' YOURS!
YOU'VE MADE A CONSIDERABLE INVESTMENT..
THE BAIL? DON'T SWEAT IT! WE GOT HISTORY, YA KNOW, AND JIMMY THE WHALE KNOWS HOW TA TAKE CARE!
GERALD JAMES SABINI
President
AND BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY I'M GONNA TAKE CARE A' YOU...
COME ON IN, TAKE A LOAD OFF!
I WON'T FORGET THIS, SABINI... I'LL SEE TO IT YOU GET YOUR DUE!
THAT'S MIGHTY WHITE A' YOU...
...AN' SPEAKIN' A WHITES, HOW'S ABOUT YOU SEE TO PICKIN' UP MY SHIRTS TOMORROW, WILLIE?
SABINI, LTD. DRY CLEANING

I DON'T--I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE--
THEN LEMME EXPLAIN IT TO YA!
I FOOT THE TAB FOR YOUR BAIL, YEAH, AND I'M GOIN' TA HELP FIX THINGS TO GET YOU OFF THAT MALPER BROAD'S HOOK--
-BUT ONLY SO I CAN HAVE THE PLEASURE A' SEEIN' YOU CRAWL, FAT MAN, JUST LIKE YOU MADE ME CRAWL FOR SO LONG!
AND WHEN I'VE HAD MY FILL A' MAKIN' YOU EAT CRUD, THERE'S A LONG LIST OF OTHER WISEGUYS WAITING TO BUY THE "OPTION" TO GIVE YOU WHAT FOR!
YOU DON'T LIKE IT, THE TOMBS ARE WAITIN'-- SO'S THE TRIAL, SO'S THE PEN! AND HOW LONG YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA LAST IN THE JOINT, A BIG PLUMP LUSCIOUS THING LIKE YOU?
IT'S ONE THING WHEN YOU'RE ON TOP AND FEARED... IT'S ANOTHER WHEN YOU'RE COMIN' DOWN PAST ALL THOSE YOU SCREWED ON YOUR WAY UP!
SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY...
WHAT'S THAT GARBAGE ON YOUR STICK, THERE?
JUST A BIT OF BONE AND HAIR--
SEE?
GAAG--
--SON OF A MOTHER--
--HAAK--
--CUT YOU OPEN LIKE--
I SHOULD THANK YOU, WHALE... YOU'VE HELPED ME REALIZE A PART OF MYSELF I THOUGHT I'D LOST FOREVER!
NOW I FEEL LIKE A MAN WITH A SECOND CHANCE... A MAN...
...BORN AGAIN...


SLAM
DIDJA HEAR?! DIDJA HEAR THAT--?!
HOLY--!
BOSS!? JIMMY!? OH GOD...
HENRY, GET THE CARS AROUND FRONT, WE GOTTA MOVE ON THIS!
"WE'RE GONNA FIND US THAT FAT MURDERING S.O.B.!"
AND BETWEEN US OR THE COPS, BIG WILLIE BETTER START SAYIN' HIS PRAYERS!
IT'S NOT PRAYERS I NEED...
...IT'S YOU, VANESSA... NOT PHOTOS AND MEMORIES, BUT YOU...
WHAT WE HAD AT THE BEGINNING... BEFORE I GOT TOO BIG, BEFORE I FORGOT HOW I GOT THERE, BEFORE I FORGOT MYSELF...
IT MEANT SOMETHING THEN... FOR A MAN TO HAVE A LITTLE BLOOD ON HIS HANDS...
...TO WEAR A MARK OF SUCCESS...


"I CAN'T--EVEN IF I GET MY OLD PARTNER TO GO IN WITH ME--I CAN'T AFFORD THIS!"
"IT'S NOT AS MUCH AS IT LOOKS, MR. MURDOCK. NOT THAT YOU COULD TELL--NO OFFENSE."
A LOWLIFE NARCOTRAFFICKER LEASED THE PLACE--PAID THROUGH FOR THE NEXT COUPLA YEARS. RIGHT BEFORE WE BUSTED HIM!
AND UNCLE SAM TOOK POSSESSION...
BUT WHATTA WE NEED IT FOR, HMMM? ENOUGH EMPTY OFFICE SPACE IN THIS CITY AS IS!
CROSSTOWN AT FISK PLAZA, FOR EXAMPLE. THE KINGPIN'S GONE LOW, BUT I'VE GOT MY INDICTMENT ON RACKETEERING... AND THERE MAY EVEN BE A MURDER CHARGE BREWING!
I OWE YOUR FRIEND WITH THE HORNS FOR HIS HELP IN ALL THAT, AND I PAY MY DEBTS--AND THEN SOME!
YOU WANT TO SUBLET HERE AT A SUBSTANTIAL DISCOUNT, IT'S YOURS! AND YOU'RE GONNA NEED NEW DIGS TO MAKE GOOD USE OF YOUR WALL DECORATION
BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK
Matthew M. Mur
THERE WAS GLASS IN THE FRAME, YOUR PAL NELSON SAID YOU LIKE IT WITHOUT.
JUST... ONE OF THOSE THINGS. WHAT--WHAT IS--?
YOUR LAW LICENSE, MR. MURDOCK.
DOES... DOES THIS MEAN...?
CONSIDER FISK'S SCREW JOB UNSCREWED. I'VE GOT A COUPLA MORE DETAILS TO WORK OUT...
BUT AS OF THIS TIME TOMORROW, YOU CAN CONSIDER YOURSELF BACK IN BUSINESS--COUNSELOR!


HYPERACUTE HEARING FAILS ME, MY "THANK YOU" TO D.A. MALPER BARELY AUDIBLE--
--SENSES INSTEAD FOCUSED ON TOUCH, THE RAISED LETTERS STILL "READING" BENEATH MY FINGERS.
"BAR ASSOCIATION OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK"--I'M A LAWYER AGAIN.
GOD IN HEAVEN, I'M A LAWYER.
BUT THERE'S MORE THAN ONE SENSORY PERCEPTION AT WORK HERE.
STREET SOUNDS ECHOING THEIR WAY INTO AN OFFICE HIGH ABOVE THE CITY, A ROOM HAUNTINGLY LIKE ANOTHER.
AN OFFICE MASKED IN THICK BLINDS. THE HEAVY SLATS SENDING A PATTERN OF WARM-COLD LIGHT-DARK OVER MY BODY.
I TRY TO BLOCK OUT THE OMINOUS FEELING OF DEJA VU, BUT IF I DON'T WANT TO ADMIT THINGS FOR WHAT THEY ARE...
...HE'S HERE TO MAKE IT ALL CLEAR TO ME.
ACCUSING.
CONDEMNING.
I SEE HIM FOR THE FIRST TIME. IN MY MIND'S EYE ONLY, IT'S TRUE, BUT IT'S NO LESS POWERFUL A VISION.
HIS EYES BURN THEIR WAY INTO ME.
"THE KING IS DEAD," THEY PROCLAIM. "LONG LIVE THE KING."


I WANT TO TURN MY FACE AWAY TO ESCAPE THIS BLAME.
A HUNDRED LEGAL ARGUMENTS COME TO MY DEFENSE, SEEKING TO REDUCE MY CULPABILITY, TO ABSOLVE MY GUILT.
THEY MAKE THEIR CASE. "IT WAS HYDRA!" IT WAS FISK-- HIS PHOBIAS, HIS EGO!-- IT WAS--"
I DISMISS THEIR EVIDENCE.
HIDING BEHIND THE SPECIFICS OF HIS COLLAPSE DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT IT WAS ONE MAN SET THINGS IN MOTION --AND KEPT THEM MOVING.
IN THE END, THAT ONE MAN WAS AT THE CENTER OF IT ALL. IN THE END, THAT MAN WAS ME.
I PRESIDE OVER THIS COURT.
I JUDGE MYSELF.
THERE WAS A MAN IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK WHO CALLED HIMSELF THE KINGPIN OF CRIME--
--AND BY HIS UTTER CONTEMPT FOR THE LAW, BECAME A SYMBOL THAT JUSTIFIED AVARICE AND VIOLENCE TO EVERY MAN AND WOMAN IN THE FIVE BOROUGHS.
THERE'S ENOUGH WRONG IN THIS CITY THAT THERE'LL ALWAYS BE SOMEONE LIKE HIM--
--BUT THERE'S ALSO ENOUGH GOOD IN IT'S PEOPLE THAT THEY DIDN'T NEED AN UNSHAKEABLE GRAVEN IMAGE TO SIN DOMINATING THEIR BETTER HALVES.
THEY NEED SOMEONE TO REDEEM AND PROTECT THAT PROMISE OF GOOD IN EVERY ONE.
THEY CAN'T HEAR ME. BUT I WHISPER A VOW TO EACH OF THEM.
I WON'T LET YOU DOWN...
THE END.

BULLPEN BULLETINS

STAN'S SOAPBOX

Hi, Heroes!

His name was Vincent Colletta, but everyone called him Vinnie. He started working for Marvel more than thirty years ago, before we were even known as Marvel. I believe we were called Atlas Publishing then. But the company name doesn't matter. What does matter is telling you what a great guy Vinnie was.

Hardly anyone except me knows this, because hardly anyone else was around at that time, but the first stories that Vinnie drew for us were romance strips. When I say "drew", I mean he did both the pencilling and the inking, and he did them superbly. Now, I'm not talking ordinary, run-of-the-mill comic book romance strips. I'm talking about some of the most breathtakingly beautiful pen-and-ink illustrations you've ever seen! Vinnie treated each and every panel as if it were intended for The Louvre. I used to tell him he was putting too much work into each strip, that it wasn't necessary to make everything so lyrical, so pleasing to the eye, so incredibly perfect. After all, we were just printing 10-cent comic books. (10 cents! That'll give you an idea how long ago it was!)

But Vinnie couldn't help himself. He was a born perfectionist. If a drawing wasn't to his liking, he'd do it over and over again until he was satisfied. In the most literal sense of the word, Vincent Colletta was a truly dedicated artist.

Years later, after the romance fad had run its course, Vinnie offered to put his skill to use by inking our other strips, mainly super hero thrillers. For the next few decades, his speed, his dependability, his total professionalism, saved our deadlines and our schedules more times than I can ever tell.

The bullpen and I recently learned of Vinnie's passing. We'll always regret that we never had the chance to bid him goodbye. But I want to take this opportunity to offer our most heartfelt condolences to his wife and family. Vinnie Colletta was a uniquely talented, charismatic artist who was always there when we needed him and who never gave less than his best. He was a credit to our industry. He was my friend. I miss ya, VC. So do we all.

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee

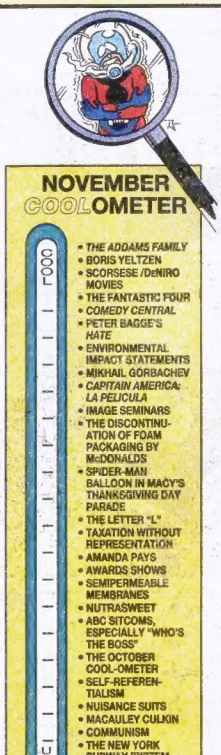
Try to remember, the kind of November ... oops, wrong month. Now we'll have to think up a new opening. Okay, so this is the month where we all chow down on turkey, mashed potatoes, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and giblets (what the heck are giblets, anyway?), eating more food in one day than we do the whole rest of the year. Then we give thanks that we only have to eat cranberry sauce once a year, and Mom puts the whole thing in the freezer for a month so we can eat the same dinner again at Christmas.

Here at Mighty Marvel, we have a lot to be thankful for this year. For starters, our head honcho (and head hipster) **Terry Stewart** initiated our first ever company picnic this past August. The picnic was a huge success, with plenty of food and drink for all, and fun and games galore (with fewer casualties than we would've expected). Among the activities were softball, football, and volleyball (Marveloids will play any sport that ends in the word "ball"), with the highlight of the day being an impromptu wet t-shirt contest! Everyone is looking forward to next year's picnic, especially Ant-Man, who said he plans on bring lots of friends next time!

The Marvel softball team also had a lot to be thankful for this year. (Actually, there were TWO Marvel softball teams this year — so many people wanted to play that it was necessary to form two teams: the Punishers and the Hellraisers. But then the two teams merged about halfway through the season.) Both teams had largely unimpressive track records, but the season ended on a high note with a victory over arch-rival, the DC Bullets. DC had won the first two games against Marvel this year, so it was a particularly satisfying victory for our side as we crushed them in a devastating 8-0 shut out.

Team captains this year were neo-hipster **Paul Becton**, and hipster-wanna-be **Evan Skolnick**. Noted the easily-bruisable Evan, "This was the first game of the season in which I did not bleed." MVP's for the final DC game were **Fabian Nicieza** (who thinks it's square to be hip), ex-hipster **Craig Kunaschk** of the direct sales department, who pounded out a three-run homer, and assistant editor **John Lewandowski**, who was a hipster when being a hipster wasn't considered hip.

After the game, assistant editor (and intercontinental-hipster) **Richard Ashford** and his lovely wife **Carol Baird** (who's so hip she's got a different last name from her husband) threw a party at their digs in New York's Upper West Side. Players from the Marvel and DC teams showed up, and a good time was had by all. Truly it can be said that everyone came away a winner on that day (of course, the Marvel team were the real winners, and the DC team went crying home to their mothers! So there!).



The kids of the St.Mary's recreational center in the South Bronx also have a lot to be thankful for this year — their building now sports a huge mural, filled with Marvel characters, painted by residents of the community. The mural was part of a project which takes kids off the streets and gives them a creative outlet. **Bob Budiansky**, who is a hipster from way back, helped the kids out on the project, ably assisted by demi-hipster (and everybody's sweetheart) **David Wohl**, whose return to staff was brutally ignored by this page several months back. Also assisting in this project was DEATHLOK artist and ultra-hipster **Denys Cowan**.

There are some thankful new fathers in the Marvel family these days — suspected hipster, GHOST RIDER writer **Howard Mackie** with his lovely wife **Deborah Highley**, just brought forth into this world a baby girl named **Alexandra**. Triple-threat SPIDER-MAN hipster **Todd McFarlane** and his fabulous wife **Wanda Kolomyjek** just joined forces to produce a baby girl named **Cyan**. And mega-hipster slash inker **Mark McKenna** and his vivacious wife **Kathy** produced their latest creative endeavor — a little bundle of joy named **Erin Marie**. All of these babies arrived on schedule, which means they have absolutely no future in this business!

One guy who is not too thankful this year is MARVEL AGE assistant editor **Mike Lackey**, who wouldn't know a hipster if one came up and bit him on the nose. Mike is famous for having the smallest desk at Marvel. Well, recently Mike moved downstairs to the ninth floor when MARVEL AGE received a new editor, cowgirl/hipster **Renée Witterstaetter**. With the move came an even smaller desk for Mike! At this rate,we may just take Mike's desk away, and he can put a board on his lap and use that! Look at the bright side, Mike — at least you're not sitting on milk crates!

Be here next month for more hyper-hip pronouncements and fooferah. You know what they say, "When the going gets hip, the hip get hopping!"